



# Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facility Needs Assessment Study

February 2022





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## Executive Summary

The City of Airdrie has acquired land to develop a new multi-purpose recreation facility and regional park within the community. The recreation facility will be located in the southwest area of Airdrie, while the regional park in the northeast area. Initial planning for these facilities involves gathering broad public input about needs and preferences and engaging community stakeholders to understand their requirements for these facilities.

GEC Architecture and HarGroup Management Consultants Inc. were commissioned by the City to conduct an Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment Study.

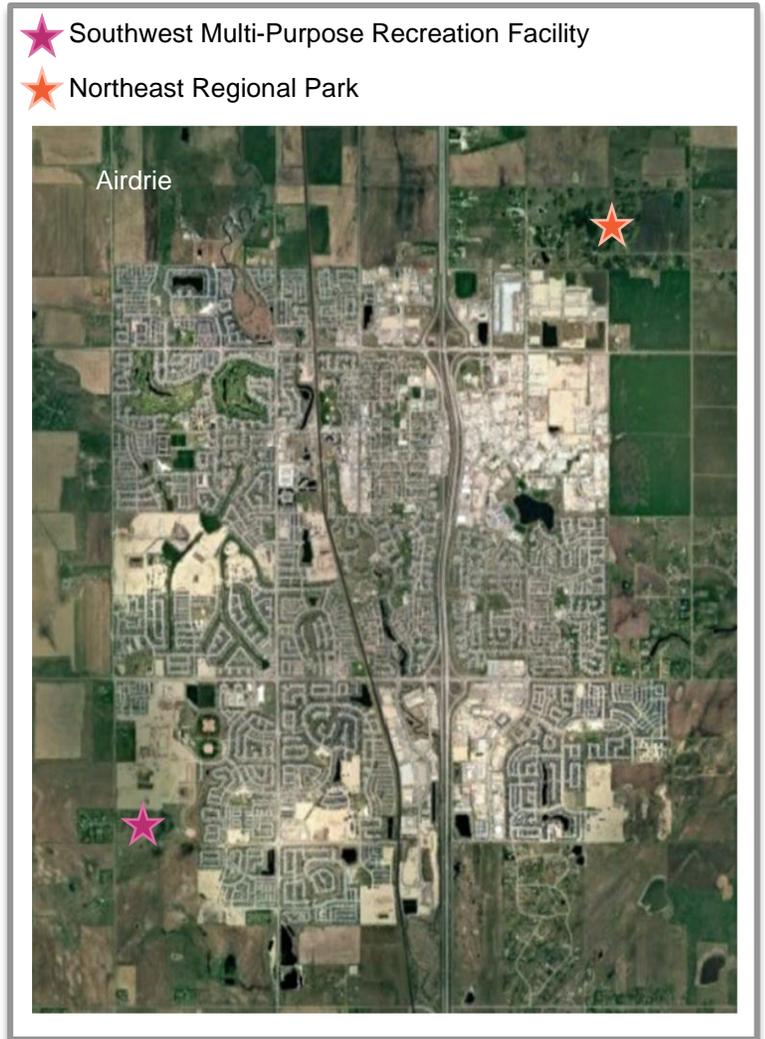
Information gathered for the Study involved input from residents and stakeholders to understand the Airdrie community and its population, identify use of recreation facilities within and around Airdrie, and determine facility interests and expectations.

Airdrie is a young, vibrant, and welcoming community that has experienced significant growth over the past few decades. It has one of the youngest populations in Canada, which, if patterns of growth persist, will continue to be in the foreseeable future.

There are many different indoor and outdoor recreation facilities within the community. However, with the population growing so quickly, gaps in the provision of facilities have developed. Indeed, some recreation facilities owned by the City of Airdrie have been operating at capacity during Prime-Time hours.

These gaps have been recognized by residents and service providers based on trying to access programs and services and use facilities in the community. In some cases, residents have chosen to go outside the community to access recreation opportunities because of the lack of facilities or overcrowding of programs and amenities.

Residents who were surveyed for the needs assessment acknowledged that they would use a new multi-purpose recreation facility (80%) and a regional park (67%), if developed in Airdrie.



### Overview of Study Specifications



Issues were explored in the engagement and research processes to gain insight into participation levels in recreation activities among Airdrie residents, barriers to participation and use of facilities by residents and service providers, and anticipated facility needs within the community. These perceptions were contrasted with comparisons of recreation facility provision in similar communities located throughout Canada and emerging industry trends and issues.

From the information gathered, gaps were identified for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities within the community. Further analysis of the information was conducted to identify considerations for scale and mix of potential facility components based on the high levels of expression of need within the community.

It is acknowledged that the Recreation Needs Assessment Study is an initial stage of investigation into the development of the facilities and additional planning is needed to fully assess project feasibility and identify design specifications for the facilities.

**Facility Considerations Based on High Expressions of Needs**

**Multi-Purpose Recreation Facility in Southwest Airdrie**

Facility Components		High Level Expression of Needs
Aquatics	Flatwater	▪ 8 to 10 lane, 25m pool
	Leisure	▪ zero depth entry, teaching, tot pool
		▪ Aquatic climbing wall
		▪ Spray park features/play structures
		▪ Water slides
Therapeutic	▪ Lazy river	
	▪ Swing rope	
Fitness Centre	Fitness gym	▪ Cardio and strength training equipment
	Studios	▪ fitness/studio spaces
	Track	▪ Walking/running track
Ice	Boarded ice	▪ Boarded ice rinks
	Leisure ice	▪ Freeform shape, unboarded rink
Indoor hard surface/ field	Hard surface	▪ Multipurpose flooring
	Turf field	▪ Synthetic turf surface
Indoor playground		▪ Play structures, climbing surface
Multipurpose/meeting rooms		▪ Various multipurpose/meeting rooms
Outdoor sport field		▪ Full rectangular field
Passive outdoor features		▪ Seating, tables, and other spaces
Support spaces		▪ Admin spaces, common areas, lease spaces

Average Allocations of \$100 Based on Perceived Facility Needs		\$
Facility Options		
Indoor	Indoor aquatic facilities - leisure	13
	Indoor aquatic facilities - flatwater	9
	Indoor ice rink (arena) facilities	5
	Climbing walls/bouldering facilities	5
	Fitness centres/gyms	4
	Seniors centres	4
	Indoor playgrounds	3
	Performing arts facilities	3
	Gymnasiums	3
	Indoor walking/running tracks	3
	Indoor field house/surface facilities	2
	Racquetball/squash/wallyball courts	2
	Visual arts centres	2
	Art galleries for art exhibits	1
	Studios - dance	1
	Museums/interpretive centre facilities	1
	Community hall/banquet facilities	1
	Studios - fitness/group exercise	1
Indoor trade show/conference/event facilities	1	
Curling facilities	1	
Studios - martial arts	<1	
Outdoor	Outdoor pathways/trails	7
	Outdoor parks/community parks	4
	Outdoor spray parks	4
	Outdoor dog park (large dogs)	3
	Outdoor ice rinks	3
	Outdoor dog park (small dogs)	2
	Outdoor tennis/pickleball courts	2
	Outdoor playgrounds	2
	Outdoor ball diamonds	1
	Outdoor skateboard parks	1
	Outdoor swimming pool	1
	Outdoor rectangular sport fields	1
	Outdoor court pads	<1
	Other	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Airdrie Residents Survey

**Regional Park in Northeast Airdrie**

Facility Components		High Level Expression of Needs
Aquatics (outdoor)	Leisure	▪ Zero depth entry pool with a swimming basin that could be rectangular, oblong, etc. in shape.
	Spray park	▪ Spray park features/play structures
	Playground	▪ Playground structures
Ball diamonds		▪ Quad diamond complex
Hardsurface court pads		▪ Basketball nets, volleyball nets.
Disc golf course		▪ 9 or 18 hole golf course
Passive outdoor features		▪ Picnic tables, fire pits, and shelters
Racquet courts	Tennis	▪ Regulation courts
	Pickleball	▪ Regulation courts
Skateboard park		▪ Bowl, decks, ramps, half-pipes, rails, etc.
Community gardens		▪ Plots, fencing, soil

## Introduction

Recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor, are valued public spaces that support active living, social wellbeing, and quality of life in communities.

No longer are these developments just places to play sports, learn to swim, or hold events. They have evolved through recreation facility planning and programming to become essential focal points within communities where people can establish meaningful relationships with their neighbours, pursue creative expression, and reach self fulfillment.

Making recreation facilities open and welcoming to all segments of the community regardless of ability, age, or gender has been one of the biggest challenges in the planning and programming of new facilities. Finding the right balance to address diverse expectations is a key to developing a project that makes sense for a community, is supportable, and has sustainability. With this context, the City of Airdrie commissioned a Multi-purpose Recreation Facility Needs Assessment Study to gather broad public input about needs and preferences for future facilities in the community.

GEC Architecture and HarGroup Management Consultants Inc. were engaged to conduct the Study. The initial phase of the project involved public input about needs and preferences for future facilities, which will be followed by preliminary conceptual design and an order of magnitude cost estimate for design and construction (see Appendices for project objectives).

This report presents the findings of the needs and preferences phase of the Study.

### Project purpose:

The purpose of the Project is to garner broad public input about the needs and preferences for future facilities and to engage key community stakeholders to understand their specific needs.

The results will be used to inform City Council about the broadest expression of needs and priorities for recreation facilities in Airdrie.



While the findings presented in this report will inform the future development of recreation facilities in Airdrie generally, there are two specific projects that are currently being planned: a new multi-purpose recreation facility in southwest Airdrie and a regional park in northeast Airdrie.

Land has been acquired by the City for both projects. The southwest multi-purpose recreation centre will be located on a Joint Use Site with Rocky View Schools. Land for the northeast regional park was acquired in December 2021 and will have natural and activity areas.

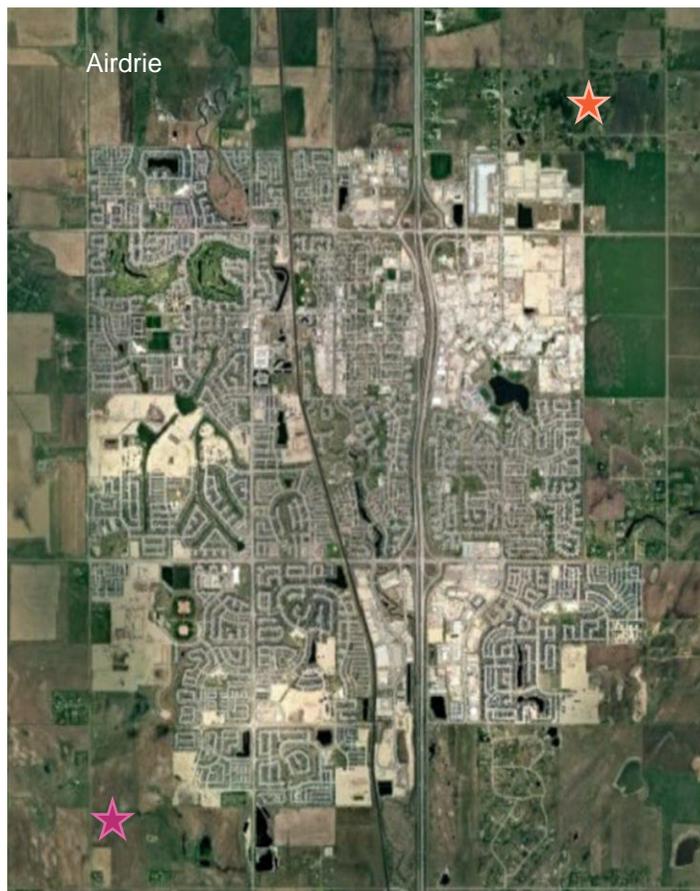
The concluding section of this report outlines considerations for these two sites based on high level expressions of needs assembled from the needs and preferences analysis.

★ **Southwest Multi-Purpose Recreation Facility:**

- To be located in southwest Airdrie at the corner of Southwinds Boulevard and Southwinds Drive.
- Part of a Joint Use Site with Rocky View School Division No. 41. A high school will also be located at the site. The parcel of land involves 17.45 ha (43.12 acres).

★ **Northeast Regional Park:**

- The City of Airdrie acquired approximately 75 ha (185 acres) of land in northeast Airdrie with the intention of developing a regional park.
- While planning of the regional park is in preliminary stages, about 30 ha (75 acres) will be preserved as a natural and treed area.



## Specifications of the Recreation Needs Assessment

The Recreation Needs Assessment Study involved gathering input and information from various sources to understand the Airdrie community and its population, identify recreation facilities that exist within Airdrie and the regional area, determine needs and preferences among residents and service providers, and review assets that exist within the community to similar municipalities throughout Canada.

### Internal Input:

- Meetings held with Recreation and Parks staff to discuss the community and various issues related to the supply and demand of recreation facilities.
- Review of user, utilization, and financial statistics from City of Airdrie recreation and parks facilities.

### Other Input:

- Review of key City of Airdrie planning documents:
  - AirdrieOne Sustainability Plan (2012)
  - Airdrie City Plan (2018)
  - Airdrie Youth Needs Assessment (2016)
  - Great Places Plan (2016)
  - Airdrie Sports Field Management Plan (2019)
  - Artificial Turf Sportfield Feasibility Study (2021)
- Review of other available information such as census and community information, industry issues, stakeholder information, facilities in the regional area.

### Residents Engagement:

- Surveys conducted with Airdrie residents:
  - Random Invite Survey
    - 476 responses from a sample frame (property tax roll) of 3,800 Airdrie households
    - Provides a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$  within a 95% confidence interval.
  - Open Engage Survey
    - Available to all Airdrie residents to provide input into Study
    - 880 responses from Airdrie and region

### Overview of Study Specifications



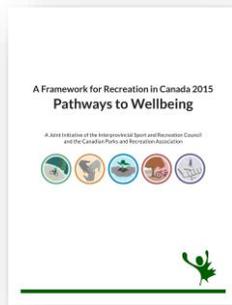
### Service Provider (Stakeholder) Engagement:

- Survey of 37 participant organizations that provide recreation services in Airdrie.
- Input gathered from school divisions, Airdrie Chamber of Commerce, and a local Junior B hockey team.

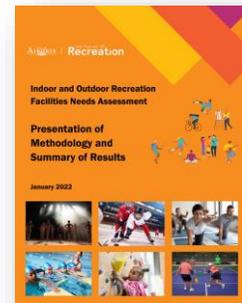
### Comparative Review:

- Review of comparative infrastructure conducted with 6 communities representing a range of populations (2016 Federal Census):
  - St. Albert, AB (65,589)
  - Sherwood Park, AB (70,618)
  - Newmarket, ON (82,244)
  - Lethbridge, AB (92,729)
  - Red Deer, AB (100,418)
  - Kelowna, BC (127,380)

Recreation is a term used to refer to a broad spectrum of activities, interests, and pursuits that contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and communities. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association defines recreation as "the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing."<sup>1</sup> Based on this definition, recreation within every community is diverse and immense. Public recreation fosters capacity and resiliency to help individuals and stakeholders address needs and achieve positive outcomes within the community. It is based on this definition that the recreation needs assessment was conducted.



Detailed information about methodology and findings from the research and engagement processes were documented in a report titled *Future of Recreation, Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment, Presentation of Methodology and Summary of Results*. In



contrast, this document presents highlights of key findings from the research and engagement processes and applies further analysis to identify considerations of high-level expectations for scale and mix of amenities for the southwest recreation facility and northeast regional park.

Readers that are interested in detailed findings or seek clarifications on specifications of the research and engagement processes can refer to the *Presentation of Methodology and Summary of Results* document.

#### **Instructions presented in Residents Engagement Surveys:**

"Recreation involves various types of activities and pursuits including arts, fitness, social, culture, leisure and sports."

It is worth noting that data from the Random Invite Survey are summarized in tables and figures shown within this document, mainly for the purposes of utility and practicality. In developing considerations of high-level expectations for facilities, all data from the residents engagement processes were used.

In addition, it should be recognized that the engagement processes were undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was acknowledged that recreation activities among residents were affected by the pandemic. As such, queries were posed to engagement participants based on recreation involvement from 2019 through 2021. This approach was used in an attempt to compensate for potential effects of the pandemic.

<sup>1</sup> Source: A Framework for Recreation in Canada, Pathways to Wellbeing, A Joint Initiative of the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2015.

## The Airdrie Community

Airdrie has a distinct identity as being a young, vibrant, and welcoming community of opportunity,<sup>2</sup> which has evolved from its residents, community leaders and Municipal policies.

Airdrie's recreation and parks services have significantly influenced this identity as residents are afforded diverse opportunities to pursue healthy lifestyles, develop social connections, and enjoy personal wellbeing.

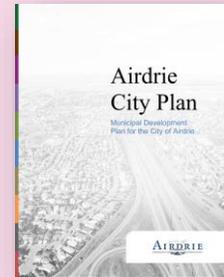
The City of Airdrie provides and supports a broad range of community services and programs intended to improve the lives of citizens. The availability of arts, culture, parks, and recreation venues enables residents to express themselves in various ways and settings.

- The City provides an attractive, multi-functional open space system with a range of opportunities to meet the needs of the community.
- There are year-round opportunities for community members of all ages to participate in arts, culture, and heritage activities.
- The community has a strong sport culture and is a destination for sports and recreational activities that are supported by the City's contributions to recreational venues, arenas, and facilities.

<sup>2</sup> Highlights about arts, culture, parks, pathways, and recreation referenced from Airdrie City Plan, Municipal Development Plan for the City of Airdrie, 2018 Update, AirdrieONE Sustainability Plan, 2012, and Great Places Plan, 2016.

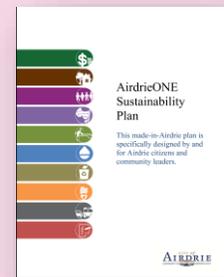
### Airdrie City Plan, Vision:

*Airdrie is a vibrant, caring community rich in urban amenities and opportunities for everyone. We value a healthy, sustainable environment connecting people and places.*



### AirdrieONE :

*The unique arts, cultural and recreational aspects of Airdrie contribute to its overall identity, sense of place, and quality of life.*



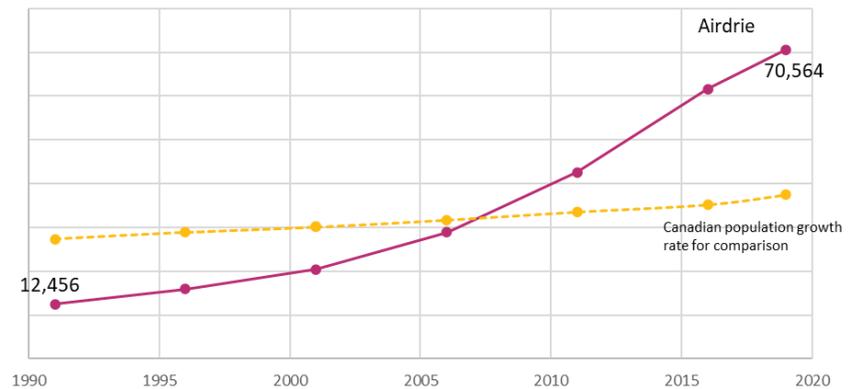
Airdrie's population over the past few decades has increased significantly making it one of the fastest growing communities in Canada.<sup>3</sup>

While the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on future growth are currently unknown, there are general expectations that the population of Airdrie will continue to increase. Based on current growth projections, Airdrie is predicted to have a population of over 110,000 by 2040.<sup>4</sup>

Much of the population growth appears to have come from Albertans who have chosen to move to Airdrie.<sup>5</sup> They may have been attracted to the community by the opportunities of affordable home ownership, even though their employment may be outside the community.

While it appears that the community has attracted new residents from various age groups, many have been younger adults aged 25 to 44 years who have moved to Airdrie with their children or have expectations of establishing a family after moving to the community. There is also a growing older adult and senior population in the community, possibly from long term residents who have chosen to remain in Airdrie through their retirement.

### Airdrie's Population Growth

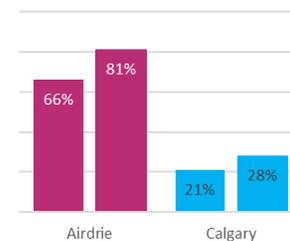


Sources: Statistics Canada, Community Profiles and Airdrie Municipal Census.

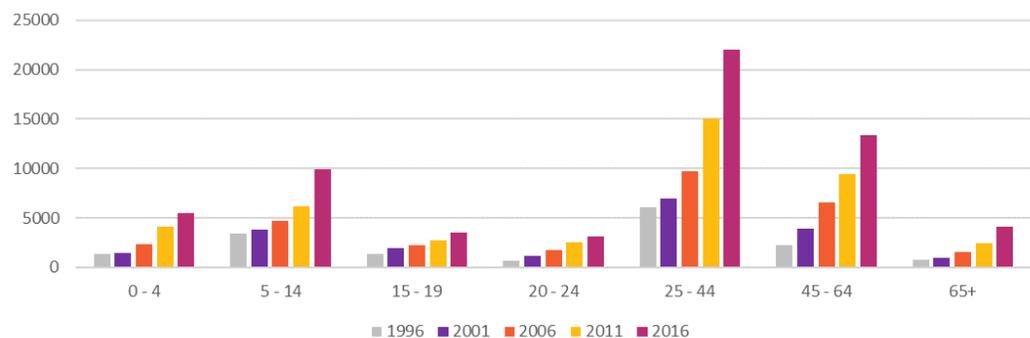
### Notable Demographic Characteristics of Airdrie



Alberta as a source of migrants



### Airdrie's Population Age Distribution Over Past Few Decades<sup>5</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Source: Airdrie City Plan, Municipal Development Plan, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Source: City of Airdrie, Growth Strategy, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Source: City of Airdrie, Comparative Community Profiles, Airdrie - Calgary, 2018 based on data from 2016 Census of Population.

House prices: Airdrie \$400,319; Calgary \$450,338

Home ownership: Airdrie 83%; Calgary 71%

Work outside community: Airdrie 67%; Calgary 6%

<sup>6</sup> Source: Statistics Canada, Community Profiles 1996 to 2016.

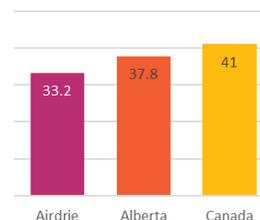
Further support of Airdrie's profile as being a young, family-oriented community is the average age of residents and the proportion of the population that is under 20 years of age. Indeed, compared to Alberta and, in particular, Canada, Airdrie has a very young population and almost one in three residents is under 20 years of age.

It is also worth noting that the community has less diversity in terms of immigrants and visible minorities, which can influence recreation interests and activities among the population. As well, there are higher household incomes, which, along with the high home ownership and lower home prices mentioned earlier, possibly allows for more disposable income to be available for recreation pursuits among residents.

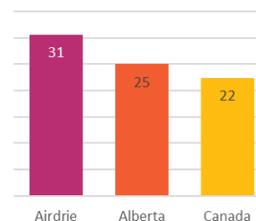
### Other Notable Demographic Characteristics of Airdrie



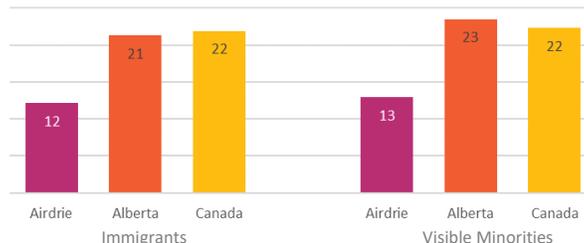
Average age



under 20 years of age (%)



Diversity (%)



Median household income



Data sources: Statistics Canada, Community Profiles.

There are implications to the provision of recreation services and facilities from understanding Airdrie's demographic profile. In particular, the younger age of residents and the prominence of children and youth in the community can have significant influence on recreation service provision. As an example, detailed analysis of information from the residents engagement surveys conducted for this Study reveals that particular segments of the community, in this case family life stage cohorts,<sup>7</sup> are more likely to use different facility categories.

As the information in the following table shows, early nest and nest with youth households (or families with children and youth) are much more likely to use certain recreation facilities than households of other family life stages. This kind of analysis offers a preview of some of the findings from the recreation needs assessment and begins to highlight one of the main factors that will contribute to identifying expectations for facilities within the community. It also highlights the challenges of being able to address the diverse needs that exist within Airdrie for recreation facilities.

<b>Prevalence of Use for Facility Categories among Family Life Stage Cohorts</b> (based on analysis of Future of Recreation Survey data comparing facility use by family life stage)							
Facility Categories		Family Life Stage of Respondent Households					
		Young adults	Early nest	Nest with youth	Late nest	Mid-aged adults	Seniors
Indoor	Aquatics						
	Flatwater		✓✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓	
	Leisure water		✓✓✓	✓✓✓			
	Ice						
	Curling rink					✓✓	✓
	Indoor boarded rinks	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓			
	Turf/hard surfaces						
	Gymnasiums	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓			
	Indoor turf fields		✓✓	✓✓✓			
	Other indoor						
	Fitness centres	✓✓✓	✓	✓			
	Gymnastic centres		✓✓✓				
	Indoor playgrounds		✓✓✓				
	Library/branches		✓	✓			
	Performance auditorium			✓		✓	✓
	Seniors centres					✓✓	✓✓✓
	Fitness studios			✓✓		✓✓	
	Outdoor						
	BMX track		✓✓	✓✓			
Diamonds		✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
Disc golf		✓✓✓	✓✓✓				
Outdoor ice rink		✓✓✓	✓✓				
Rectangular fields		✓✓	✓✓✓				
Skateboard park			✓✓✓				
Spray/splash park		✓✓✓					
Tennis/pickleball courts			✓✓	✓			

✓ represents extent of higher likelihood of family life stage cohorts to use facilities.  
Other facility categories were examined in the surveys but are not listed above because no distinct differences of use were observed among the various family life stage cohorts.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendices for definitions of Family Life Stages.

## Recreation in Airdrie

Within Airdrie, there is an assortment of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities available where residents can participate in activities, programs, and services.

### Indoor Recreation Facilities

In terms of indoor facilities, the key facilities that are operated or supported by the City include:

- **Genesis Place** - a multi-purpose recreation centre situated in southeast Airdrie.
- **Bert Church Theatre** - a live performing arts theatre located near Genesis Place.
- **Airdrie Public Library** - The existing public library is located near City Hall in central Airdrie. Airdrie City Council recently endorsed the development of a new multi-use and library facility to replace the existing facility. The new multi-use and library facility space will be located a short distance from the existing facility.
- **Town & Country Centre** - A multi-amenity facility that includes hall rooms, the Airdrie Curling Club, and the Airdrie Over 50 Club. It is located in north central Airdrie.
- **Nose Creek Valley Museum** - A local history museum located in south Airdrie.
- **Rob Ebbessen and Plainsman Arenas** - Boarded ice rinks located in south central and central Airdrie.

Further details about the inventory of indoor recreation facilities operated or supported by the City of Airdrie are presented on the following page.

Genesis Place is acknowledged as a key hub recreation activity within Airdrie. Residents can participate in various activities and programs in the Aquatic Centre, ice rinks, indoor turf fields, gymnasium, Fitness Centre, indoor playground, gymnastics facility, as well as multiple program and meeting rooms. Many Airdrie residents purchase punch card and monthly passes to have preferred rates to access the facility.

Other recreation service providers operating facilities in Airdrie include school gymnasiums, Boys & Girls Club that has two youth centres in the community, private fitness centres and studios, martial arts studios, and private sport development and training facilities.

**Genesis Place**



<b>Genesis Place</b>
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Aquatic Centre:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25m six lane competitive pool</li> <li>• Dive tank with one metre board</li> <li>• Aquatic climbing wall</li> <li>• Leisure pool with spray toy features</li> <li>• Water slide</li> <li>• Lazy river</li> <li>• Hot tub</li> <li>• Steam room</li> </ul>
<b>Ice rinks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 NHL sized rinks - 250 spectator seating each</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor turf fields</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boarded synthetic turf flooring - 55m x 24m (180ft x 80ft)</li> <li>• Boarded Pulastic surface - - 55m x 24m (180ft x 80ft)</li> </ul>
<b>Gymnasium:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 703 m<sup>2</sup> (7,566 ft<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>Studio:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind Body studio - 132 m<sup>2</sup> (1,421 ft<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>• Fitness/leisure studio - 107 m<sup>2</sup> (1,152 ft<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>Fitness Centre:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,300 m<sup>2</sup> (14,000 ft<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>Fun Place</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 111 m<sup>2</sup> (1,200 ft<sup>2</sup>) children's play area</li> </ul>
<b>Airdrie Edge Gymnastics Club:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,230 m<sup>2</sup> (24,000 ft<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>Multipurpose/meeting/conference rooms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various rooms situated throughout the facility</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor amenities</b>
<b>Ed Eggerer Athletic Park:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rectangular, multi-use playing field</li> <li>• 400m, 8 lane rubberized running track</li> <li>• Track and field, long jump, and triple jump pits</li> <li>• 1,000 seat grandstand, press box, and scoreboard and clock</li> </ul>

<b>Ron Ebbesen Arena</b>
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Twin ice arena:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHL sized boarded ice rink with 460 spectator seating capacity</li> <li>• NHL sized boarded ice rink with 200 spectator seating capacity</li> </ul>

<b>Plainsman Arena</b>
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Single ice arena:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHL sized boarded ice rink with 140 spectator seating capacity</li> </ul>

<b>Town and Country Centre, Airdrie Curling Club, Airdrie Over 50 Club</b>
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Halls, stage, and kitchen:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banquet hall which seats 490 theatre style/400 at tables</li> <li>• Smaller hall that seats 90 theatre style/70 at tables</li> </ul>
<b>Airdrie Curling Club</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 sheets</li> <li>• Lounge and kitchen</li> </ul>
<b>Airdrie Over 50 Club</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors meeting room</li> </ul>

<b>Bert Church Theatre</b>
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Performing Arts Facility:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 377 seating theatre</li> <li>• Stage</li> <li>• Sound and lighting systems</li> </ul>

<b>Airdrie Public Library</b> (Note: The City of Airdrie is currently planning for new larger public library in the community to replace the existing facility)
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Public library:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 974 m<sup>2</sup> (10,494 ft<sup>2</sup>)</li> </ul>

<b>Boys &amp; Girls Club of Airdrie</b>
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Youth facilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centre at Rob Ebbesen Arena</li> <li>• The Club on Allen Street</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Nose Creek Valley Museum</b>
<b>Indoor amenities</b>
<b>Museum facility:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Museum exhibit and administration spaces</li> <li>• 2 meeting rooms</li> </ul>

## Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Regional and neighbourhood parks and pathways are situated throughout Airdrie. Highlights of regional parks and sport fields in Airdrie are presented to the right and on the previous page associated with Genesis Place.

The community has a premier outdoor rectangular field facility, Ed Eggerer Athletic Park, which is located at Genesis Place. It has a full-sized multi-sport rectangular field. There is a 1,000-seat grandstand, as well as press box, and scoreboard and clock. Athletic track and field amenities such as a 400m 8 lane running track and jump pits are also located at the facility. It is used by a variety of sport user groups within Airdrie, as well as varsity activities of local high schools.

Chinook Winds Regional Park provides premier sport opportunities with 8 diamonds within 2 quad amenities for baseball, softball, fastball, and slo-pitch. The Park also has beach volleyball, a splash park, skate park and other recreation amenities.

Other regional parks offer an assortment of recreation opportunities with rectangular fields, diamonds, tennis/pickleball courts, disc golf courses, BMX track, playgrounds, and ice skating amenities.

<i>Chinook Winds Regional Park</i>
Outdoor amenities
<b>Diamonds:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 quad, 8 diamonds (baseball, softball, fastball, slo-pitch)</li> </ul>
<b>Volleyball:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 beach volleyball courts</li> </ul>
<b>Splash Park</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal with various splash park water features</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skate park</li> <li>3 playgrounds</li> <li>Multi-use court pad</li> <li>Concessions and picnic areas</li> <li>Boarded skating rink</li> </ul>

<i>East Lake Regional Park</i>
Outdoor amenities
<b>Rectangular fields:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 full rectangular fields</li> </ul>
<b>Tennis courts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 courts</li> </ul>
<b>Ice Rink:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boarded skating rink</li> </ul>

<i>Nose Creek Regional Park</i>
Outdoor amenities
<b>Park features:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amphitheatre, concession area, fire pit</li> </ul>
<b>Pickleball courts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 courts</li> </ul>

<i>Fletcher Regional Park</i>
Outdoor amenities
<b>Diamonds:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 shale infield diamonds</li> </ul>
<b>Airdrie BMX Track:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BMX track with starter hill</li> </ul>
<b>Disc golf:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 hole tonal course</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-use court pad</li> <li>Playground</li> </ul>

<i>Monkland Fields</i>
Outdoor amenities
<b>Rectangular fields:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 full and 3 youth fields</li> </ul>
<b>Ice Rink:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boarded skating rink courts</li> </ul>

<i>Summerhill Tennis Courts Park</i>
Outdoor amenities
<b>Tennis courts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 courts</li> </ul>

<i>Bayside and Big Springs Crescent Parks</i>
Outdoor amenities
<b>Ice Rinks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boarded ice rinks</li> </ul>

## Recreation Facilities in the Regional Area

Throughout the regional area there are recreation facilities available to Airdrie residents. Most of the facilities are situated in Crossfield,

### Crossfield:

- Community hall
- Indoor ice rink
- Indoor curling rink
- Library
- Spray/splash park
- Diamonds, rectangular fields, and other park amenities

### Beiseker:

- Community hall
- Indoor ice rink
- Diamonds, rectangular fields, and other park amenities

Irricana, Beiseker, and Rocky View County (which includes Balzac and Madden). Some of the key facilities include:

### Irricana:

- Community hall
- Indoor curling rink
- Library
- Diamonds, rectangular fields, and other park amenities

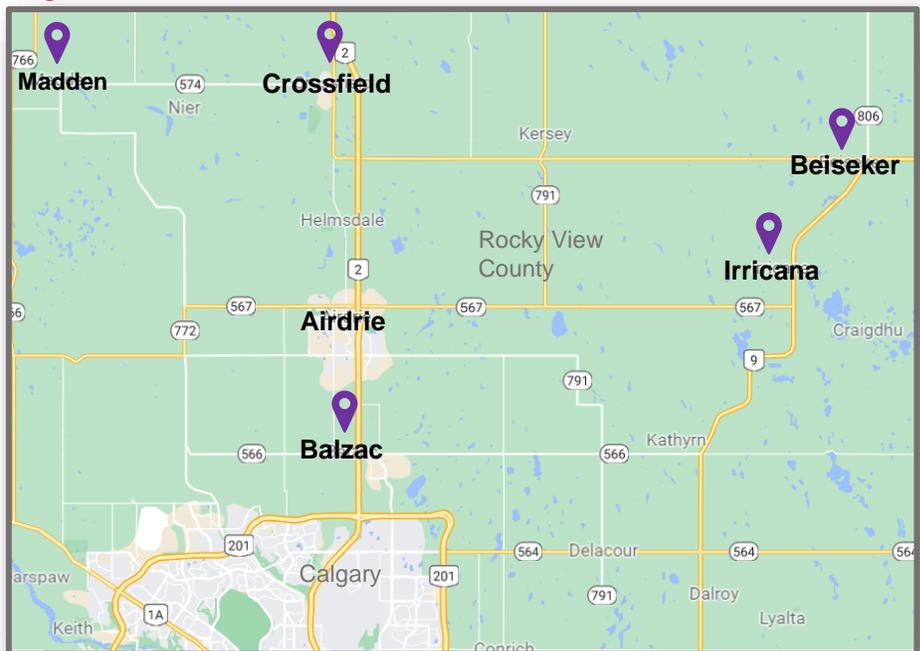
### Rocky View County:

- Community halls (Golden Rod, Madden, Balzac)
- Indoor curling rink (Madden)
- Diamonds (Madden) and other park amenities
- Performing arts facility (Balzac - private)
- Gymnasium (Balzac - private)

It is worth noting that within the regional area there is an urban area proposed that could have a population of 35,000 to 45,000. It is called Balzac West and will be located south of Airdrie.<sup>8</sup>

The proposed development has been in the planning stages since 2007. There are various water and sewer management issues that need to be addressed before the development proceeds. However, should these issues be resolved, there could be a significant population base that develops south of Airdrie that might use Airdrie recreation facilities such as the new multi-purpose recreation centre in the southwest area of the community.

*Regional Area*



<sup>8</sup> Rocky View County, Balzac West Area Structure Plan, 2007.

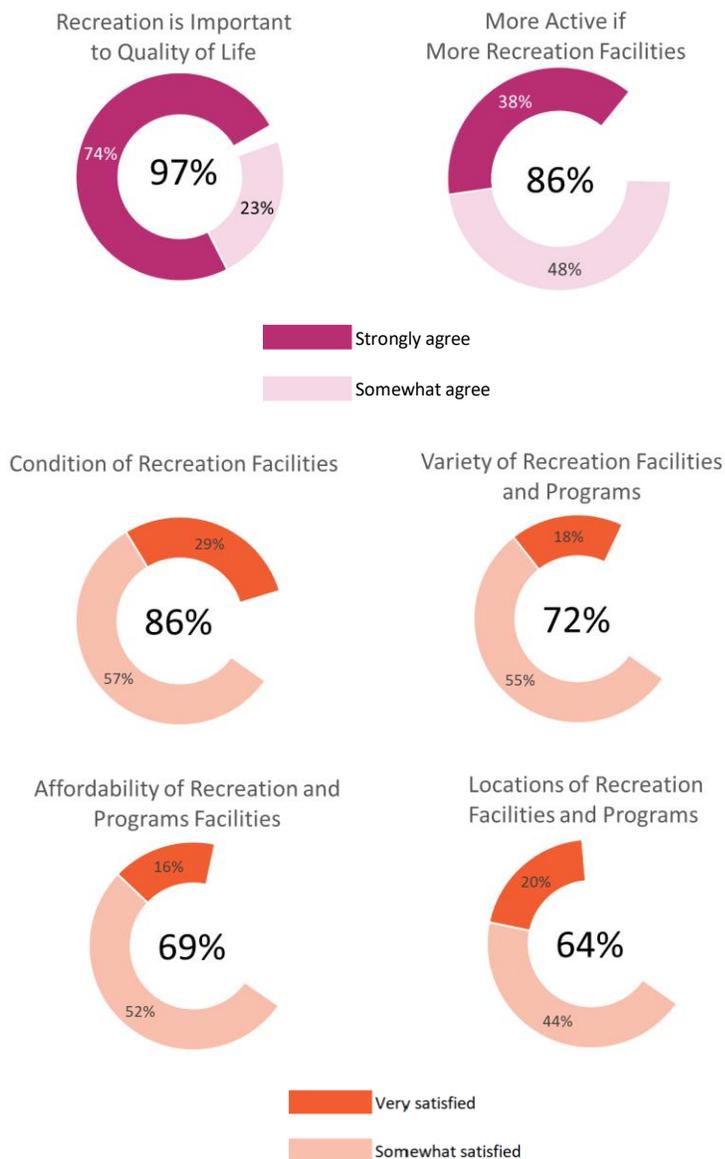
## Community Perceptions of Recreation

Recreation is a vital aspect of the lives of Airdrie residents. For instance, the vast majority of respondents to the engagement surveys indicated recreation is important to their quality of life.

When asked about recreation facilities and programs in the community, there were fairly high levels of satisfaction among residents. A significant majority of survey respondents indicated satisfaction with the condition of existing recreation facilities. Opinions were less favourable on the variety, affordability, and, in particular, the location of recreation facilities and programs. Respondents living on the west side of Airdrie were notably less satisfied with the location of facilities and programs.

There's a general perception among many residents that recreation opportunities are lacking within the community. Support for this assertion is evident from the majority of survey respondents who indicated that members of their household would be more active if more recreation facilities were located in Airdrie. Respondents from throughout the community concurred with this sentiment.

### Residents' Perceptions of Recreation



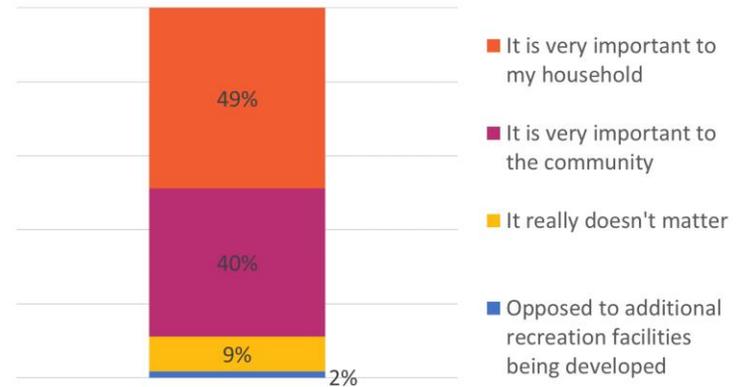
Data source: Residents Survey.

The community's resolve for new recreation facilities is demonstrated through the survey findings. Indeed, almost half of survey respondents indicated that it was very important to their households that additional facilities are developed in the city.

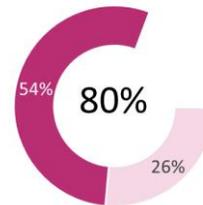
Further, a significant majority of respondents indicated that members of their household would use a multi-purpose recreation centre in southwest Airdrie and most would use a regional park in northeast Airdrie.



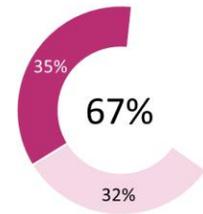
### Residents' Interest in New Recreation Facilities



Use a Multipurpose Recreation Centre in southwest Airdrie



Use a Regional Park in northeast Airdrie



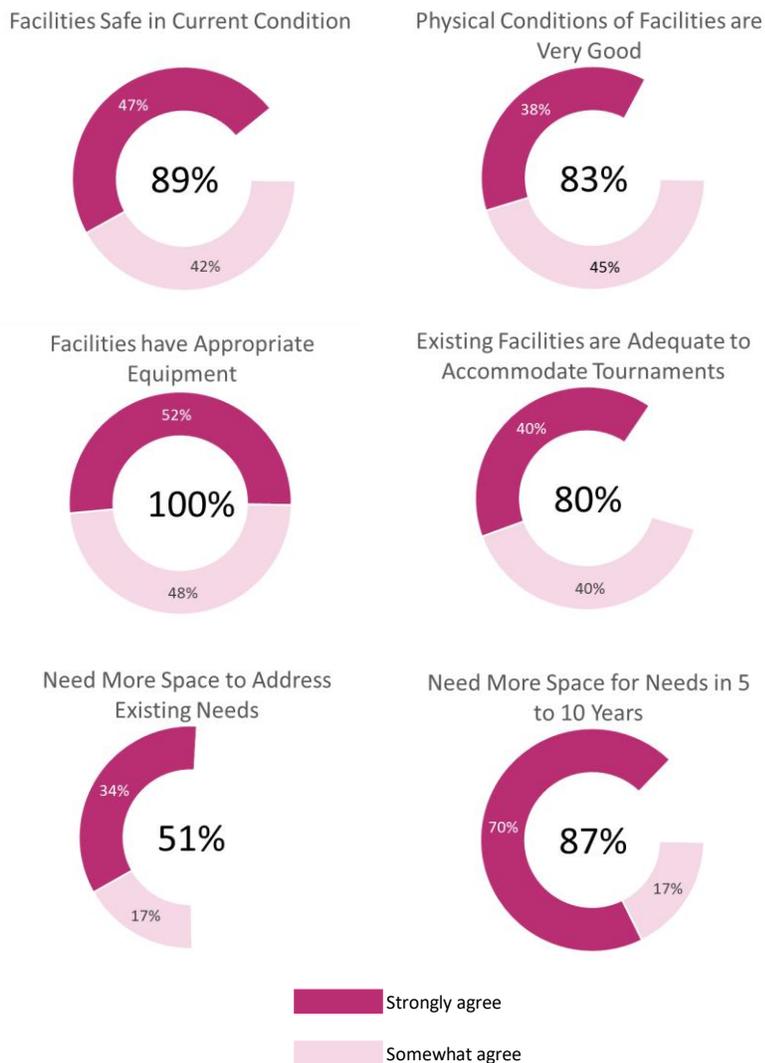
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree

Data source: Residents Survey.

Recreation service providers that participated in the engagement process had perspectives similar to those expressed by residents.

To demonstrate, a significant majority of service providers concurred that facilities are safe, in very good condition, and have appropriate equipment. Further, most agreed that existing facilities are adequate to accommodate tournaments for their organizations. However, when it came to the availability spaces or playing surfaces for program delivery, almost half of service providers indicated more are currently required in Airdrie and almost all indicated more are necessary in the next 5 to 10 years.

### Service Providers' Perceptions of Recreation Facilities<sup>9</sup>



Data source: Service Providers Survey.

<sup>9</sup>Note: Data in figures show results from informed respondents (those that did not indicate 'don't know').

## Participation in Recreation

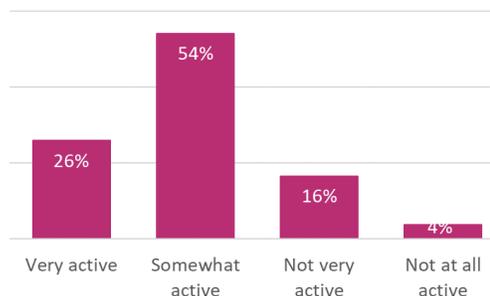
Understanding participation and involvement in recreation among Airdrie residents provides context to identifying and understanding priorities for facility development in the community. The various engagement processes conducted for this Needs Assessment Study highlight Airdronians recreation pursuits and interests.

To begin, survey respondents perceived themselves to be active in recreation; albeit most related to being somewhat rather than very active. When asked about involvement in 61 different activities, most survey respondents stated household members participated in 12. The average was higher (17) for respondents who thought their household members were very active and significantly lower (2) if not at all active (see appendices for further information). Households with children or youth (early nest and nest with youth) participated in more activities than households without.

Participation among survey respondents in various indoor and outdoor recreation activities is presented on the next two pages of this report. The findings reveal that Airdronians engage in some activities more readily than others and, as a result, use certain recreation facilities more than others. For instance, survey respondents stated higher participation in activities that involve pathways and parks than other outdoor facilities. Similarly, activities at aquatic centres, fitness centres, and libraries were higher in participation than other indoor facilities. It should be noted, however, that these observations are irrespective of frequency of participation.<sup>10</sup> Even so, the findings infer the relevancy of facility categories to the Airdrie population as a whole.

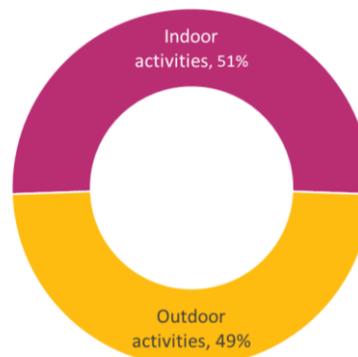
Further analysis of the participation information suggests that Airdrie households participate in indoor as much as outdoor activities (not accounting for frequency of participation).

### Perceived Levels of Household Activity in Recreation among Residents



Data source: Residents Survey.

### Distribution of Participation in Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Activities in Airdrie\*

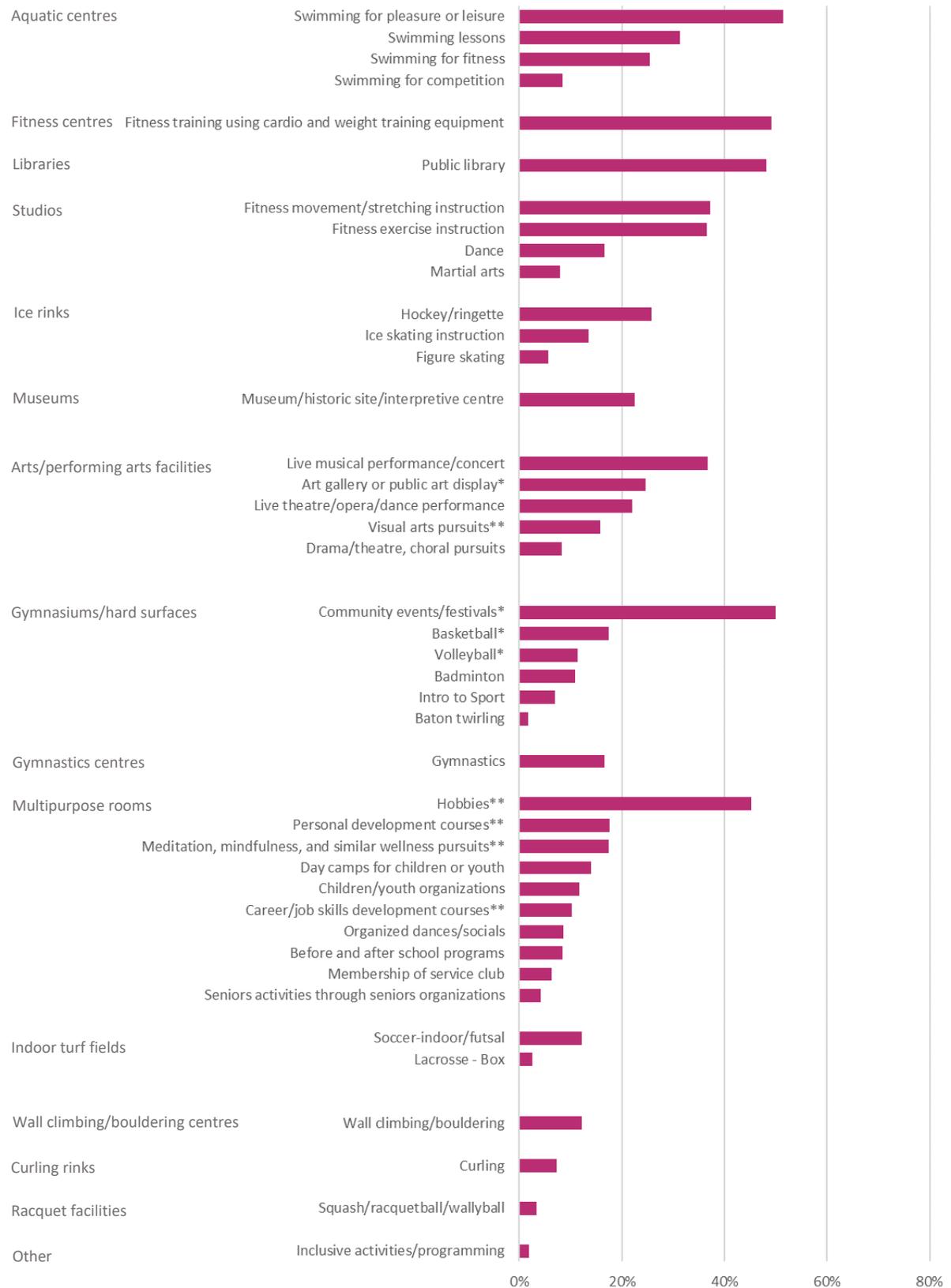


\*Based on types of activities participated in, not frequency of participation.

Data source: Residents Survey.

<sup>10</sup> Note: Actual use or visitation may be higher for some facilities when frequency of participation is considered.

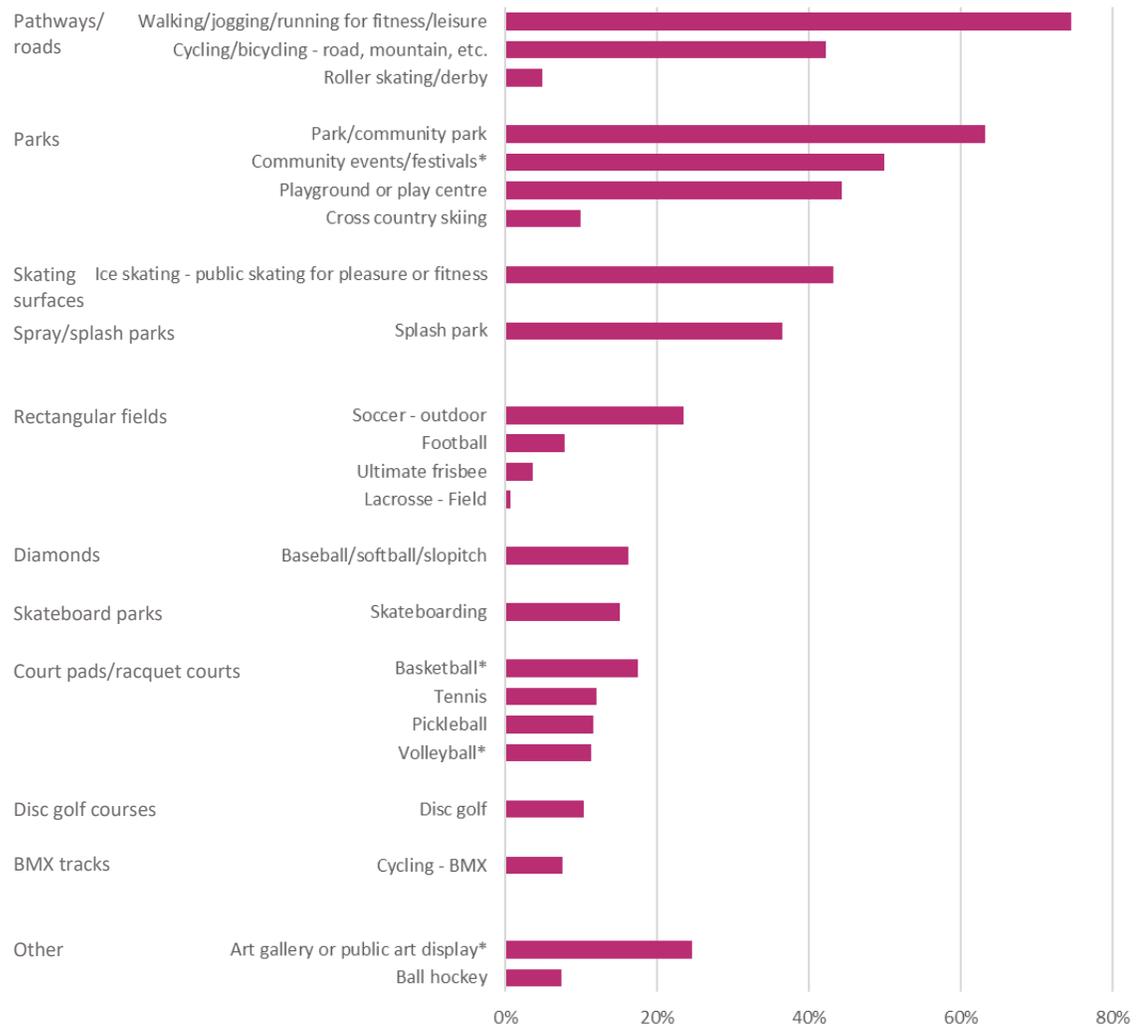
**Participation in Indoor Activities among Residents** (at least one member of household)



Data source: Residents Survey.

Note: \*Engaged both indoor and outdoor.  
\*\*Engaged primarily at home.

**Participation in Outdoor Activities among Residents** (at least one member of household)



Data source: Residents Survey.

Note: \*Engaged both indoor and outdoor.

Various queries were posed in the residents survey to determine if there is interest to do more activities or stop or do differently due to Covid.

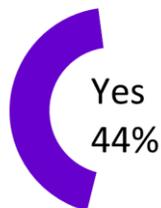
Large segments of survey respondents expressed interest in doing more activities, including more of what they did in 2019 or starting new activities. These respondents typically expressed concerns about limited access in Airdrie for why they weren't more engaged. Swimming and fitness related activities were commonly mentioned for wanting to do more or start doing.

About one in four respondents stated that household members would stop, do less, or do activities differently due to the Covid pandemic. Fitness-related activities were most commonly cited, mainly for reasons of having purchased equipment, concerns of being in facilities with other people, and started different activities.

Overall, the findings suggest that Airdronians are mainly interested in starting or doing more recreation activities; however, to do so, additional access is likely needed within the community.

### Possible Changes in Recreation Activities among Residents

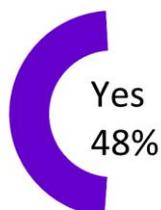
Had Been Doing in 2019, But Wanted to Do More



Top Mentioned Activities:  
(% of respondents)

- Swimming (17%)
- Fitness exercise instruction (10%)
- Fitness training ( 9%)
- Gymnastics (6%)
- Dance (6%)

Did Not Take Part in 2019/20/21, But Want To Start Doing



Top Mentioned Activities:  
(% of respondents)

- Swimming (12%)
- Pickleball (9%)
- Martial arts ( 7%)
- Fitness training (7%)
- Fitness movement/training (6%)
- Fitness exercise instruction (6%)

Activities Participated Prior to Covid, But Likely to Stop/Do Less/Differently



Top Mentioned Activities:  
(% of respondents)

- Fitness training (35%)
- Fitness exercise instruction (10%)
- Swimming (general) (6%)
- Swimming lessons (6%)
- Martial arts (6%)

Data source: Residents Survey.

To get further indications of recreation participation, user statistics at City of Airdrie facilities were reviewed, and user group participation was estimated.<sup>11</sup> The findings present further information about how Airdrie residents use facilities in the community for recreation purposes.

- Admissions/visitations at Genesis Place were over 400,000 and program participants were over 22,000 in 2019.
- Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 participants engage in programs provided by user groups that use City indoor ice rink arenas.
- Indoor turf fields and outdoor rectangular fields user groups have approximately 2,000 to 2,500 and 2,500 to 3,000 participants respectively.
- Ball diamond user groups have approximately 1,500 to 2,000 participants.
- Other user groups that use the Aquatic Centre and hard surfaces (gymnasium) at Genesis Place and the curling rink at the Town and Country Centre have less than 1,000 participants.

Other Airdrie recreation facilities such as arts and culture facilities, parks, pathways, other outdoor sport fields, etc. are also extensively used by residents based on the findings from the residents survey.

Estimated User/User Group Visitation/Participation at Some of City of Airdrie Facilities for 2019	
	Estimates
Admissions/passholder visitations at Genesis Place	400,600
Genesis Place program participants	22,400
Aquatic user group participants	300 to 400
Ball diamond user group participants	1,500 to 2,000
Hard surfaces (gymnasium) user group participants	500 to 600
Ice user group participants	
Boarded rinks	4,000 to 5,000
Curling rinks	500 to 550
Indoor turf fields (boarded) user group participants	2,000 to 2,500
Rectangular fields user group participants	2,500 to 3,000



<sup>11</sup> Note: These data were gathered and estimated from information provided by the City of Airdrie, service providers, and desk research.

## Recreation Facility Use

Over the next few pages, figures show information about survey respondents' use of indoor and outdoor facilities in and outside of Airdrie. In many cases, these results mirror the findings about participation in recreation activities. For example, aquatic facilities, the public library, and fitness centres are indoor facilities prominently used in Airdrie, as are pathways and trails, parks, and playgrounds, skating surfaces, and spray/splash parks for outdoor facilities.

Overall, use of Airdrie facilities is much more prevalent than use of facilities outside the community. These findings might imply the importance of having facilities in the community. To demonstrate, about three in ten survey respondents indicated attendance at Bert Church Theatre, which is higher than the one in five respondents that stated use of performing arts facilities in Calgary. This particular example is highlighted as there are many more of these facilities located in Calgary, and yet the survey findings suggests that Airdrie residents are more likely to attend events at Bert Church Theatre than in Calgary.

Nonetheless, Airdrie residents use recreation facilities outside the community. When asked why they go outside Airdrie, about a third of survey respondents (33%) indicated that the types of facilities used outside do not exist in Airdrie and approximately a quarter (27%) stated that facilities/programs are full or too crowded.

The following facilities were commonly associated with these explanations, possibly inferring gaps that exist in the provision of facilities in Airdrie:

### Do not exist in Airdrie (all located in Calgary)<sup>12</sup>

- Art centres
- Art galleries
- Aquatic centres
- Indoor playgrounds
- Museums/interpretive centres
- Performing arts centres

### Facilities too full/crowded in Airdrie

- Aquatic centres in Calgary
- Community halls in Calgary
- Indoor ice rinks in Calgary
- Indoor playgrounds in Calgary
- Outdoor diamonds in Calgary
- Outdoor playgrounds in Calgary
- Outdoor diamonds in Crossfield, Beiseker, Irricana
- Splash park in Crossfield

Almost a third of service providers that participated in the engagement process indicated they use facilities outside of Airdrie other than Calgary and one in five use facilities in Calgary.

### *Service Provider Use of Facilities Outside Airdrie*



Data source: Service Provider Survey.

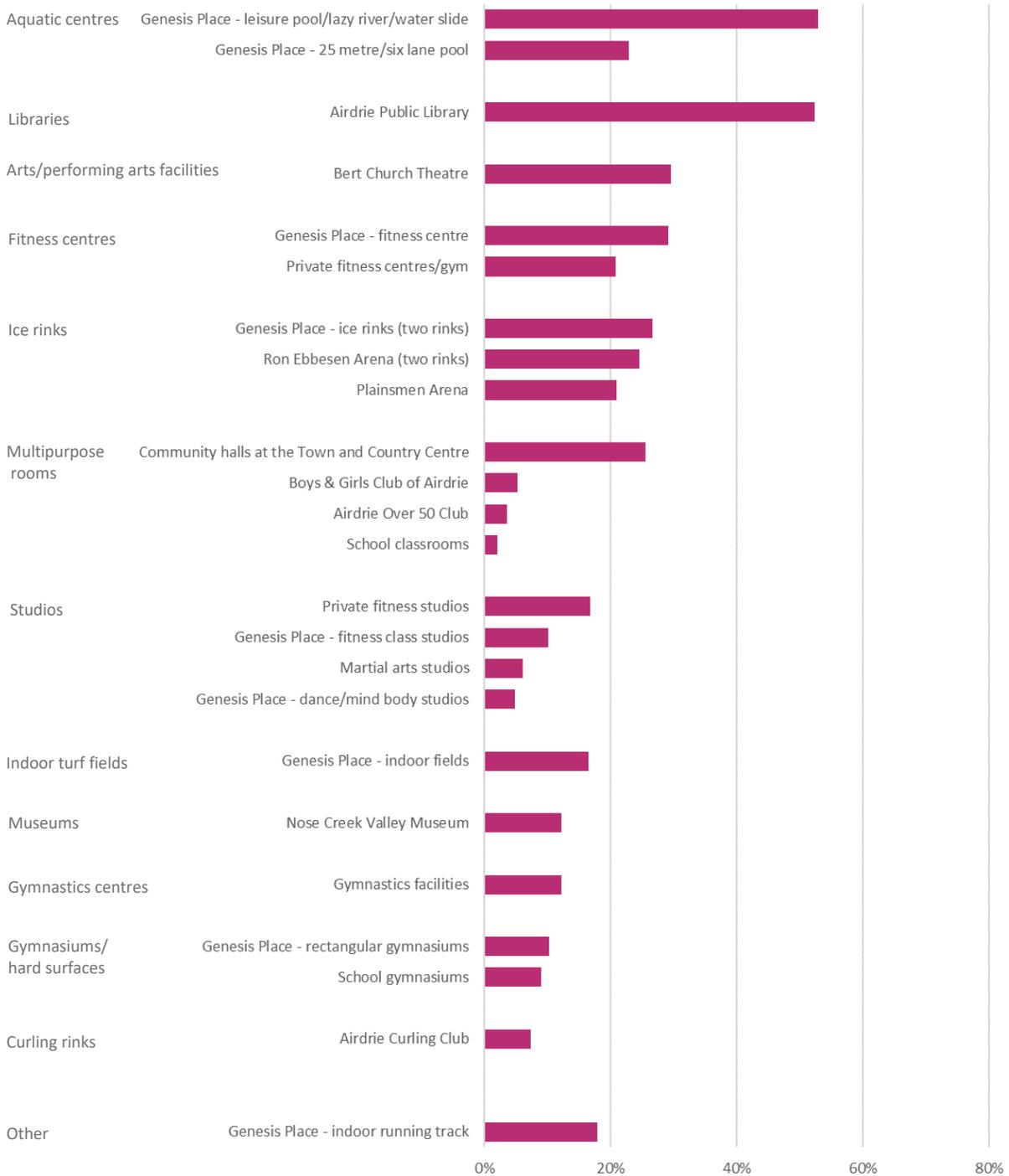
Some service providers use facilities in other communities due to sport boundaries encompassing communities outside Airdrie that require use, facilities perceived as being less expensive to use, and other facilities having

<sup>12</sup> \*Note: While some of these facilities exist in Airdrie, respondents may have been referring to specific features or types such as a wave pool in an aquatic centre. It should also be noted that these facilities were most commonly associated rather than being directly connected with the response 'facilities do not exist.'

features that are needed to serve participants (e.g., aquatic facilities). Service providers that indicated use outside Airdrie was due to lack of

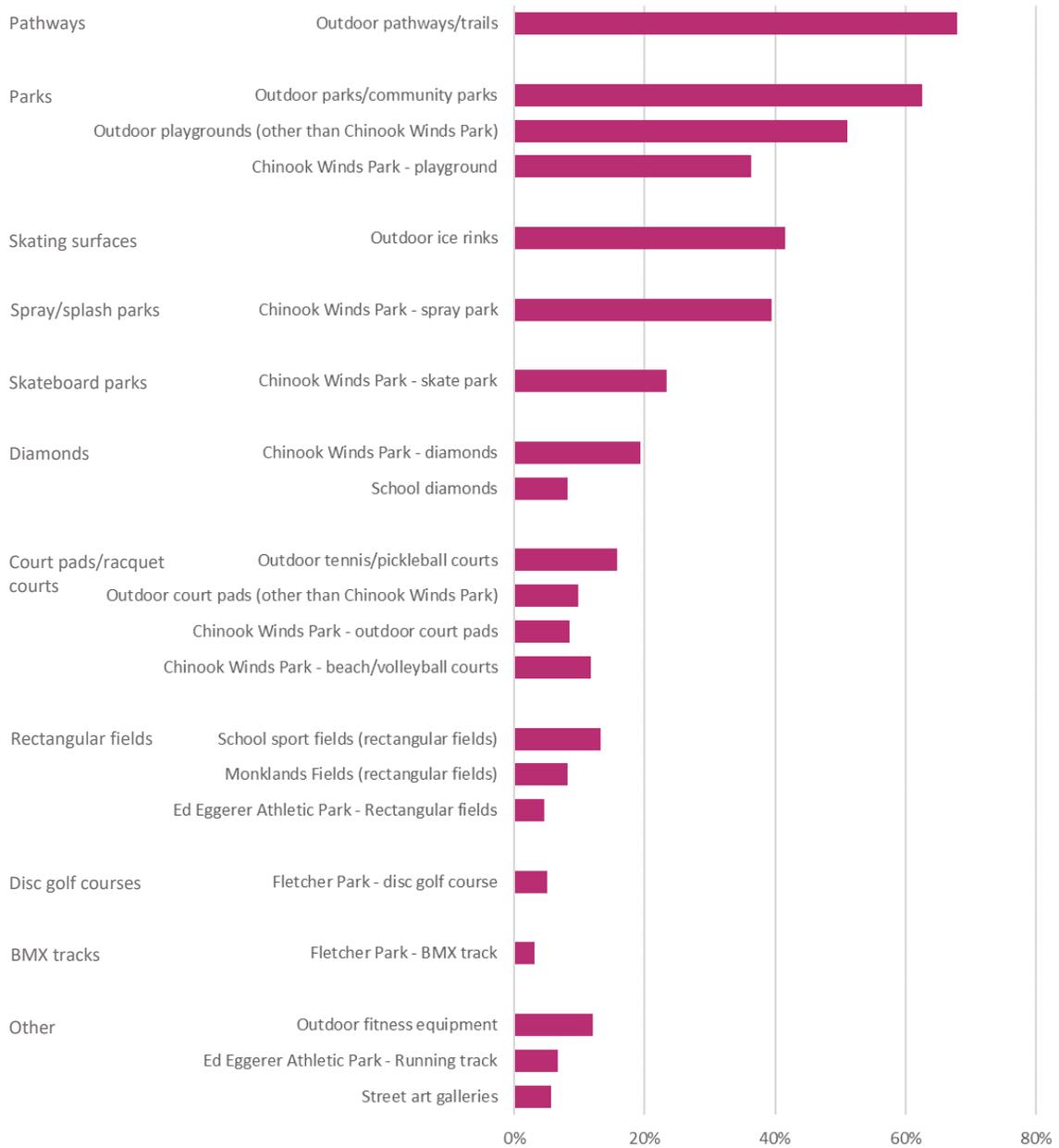
facilities in the community deliver hockey, pickleball, ringette, and swimming programs.

**Residents' Use of Airdrie Indoor Recreation Facilities**



Data source: Residents Survey.

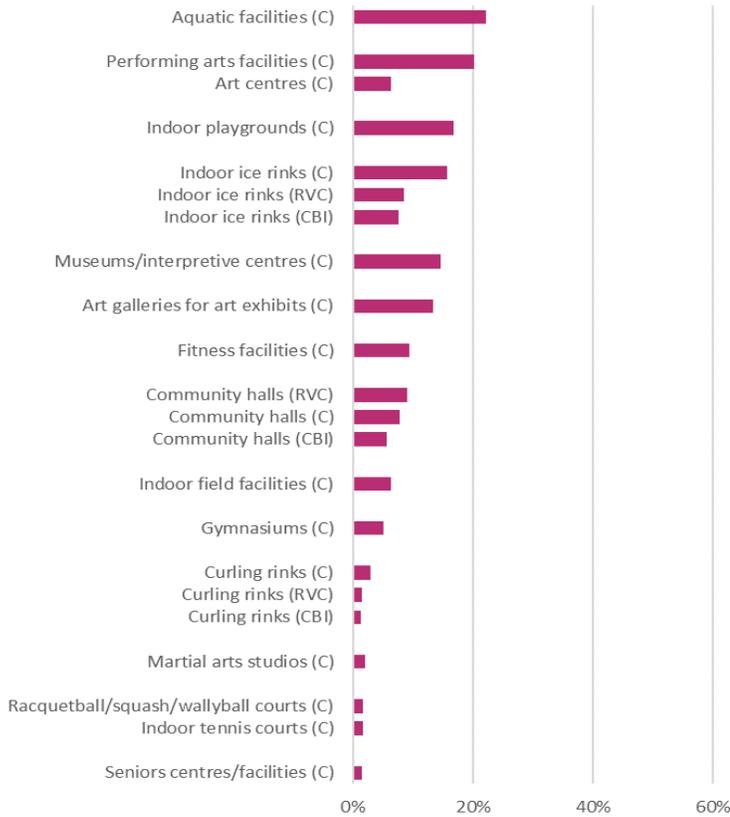
### Residents' Use of Airdrie Outdoor Recreation Facilities



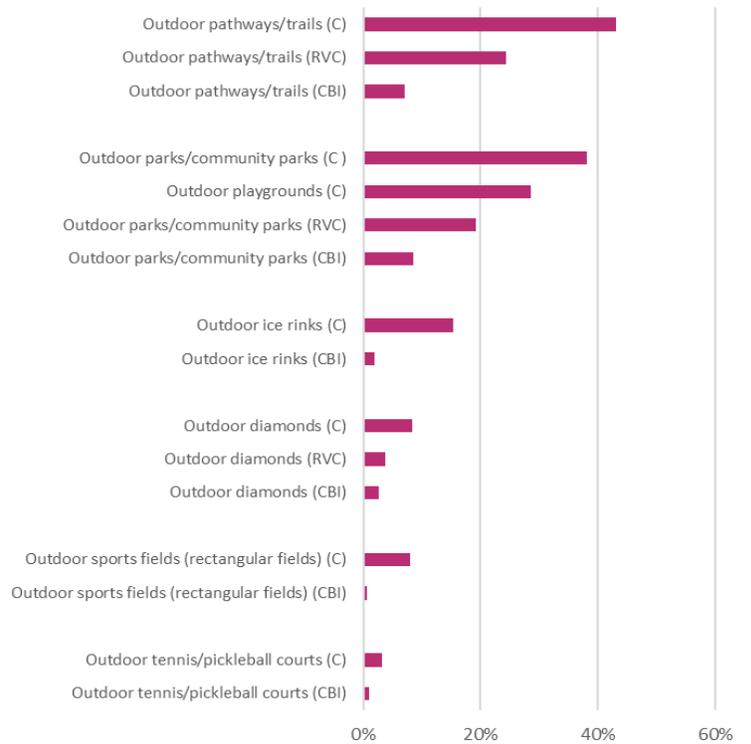
Data source: Residents Survey.

## Residents' Use of Recreation Facilities Outside Airdrie

### Indoor Facilities



### Outdoor Facilities



(C) Calgary  
 (RVC) Rocky View County  
 (CBI) Crossfield, Beiseker, Irricana

Data source: Residents Survey.

Information available from the City of Airdrie highlight rental use at facilities among user groups to deliver programs and services to Airdronians.<sup>13</sup>

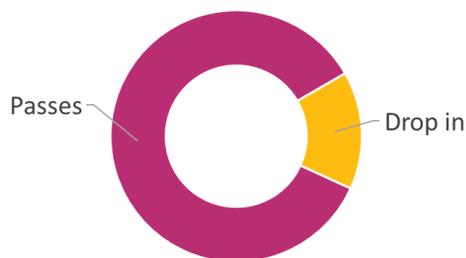
Revenues from various sources for recreation facilities operated by the City of Airdrie were over \$6 million in 2019. Just over a third of the revenue was derived from admissions and pass sales (37%) at Genesis Place. About a quarter of revenues (23%) came from aquatics programs and another quarter (24%) from ice arena rentals. The remaining revenues were received from other sources. This information highlights use of City of Airdrie facilities, but also levels of receipts to the Municipality from users and service providers.

In 2019, Genesis Place had approximately 400,000 visits from passholders and drop in admission users. Passholder visitations were significantly higher than drop in admissions. These findings reveal the importance of selling passes to Airdrie residents for Genesis Place.

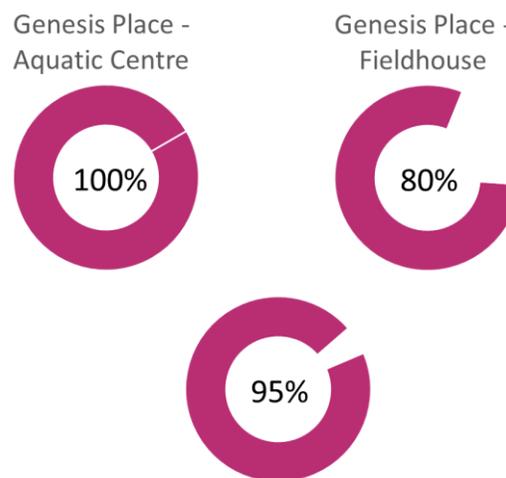
Earlier, information was presented about use of facilities outside of Airdrie being caused by lack of or overcrowding at facilities. A sample of hours drawn from use during Prime-Time hours at the Genesis Place Aquatic Centre and Fieldhouse, and all indoor boarded ice arenas during November 2019 support these inferences. The Aquatic Centre at Genesis Place and all community arenas were at or close to capacity of available Prime Time hours. Fields in the Genesis Place Fieldhouse were also highly used during Prime-Time hours, especially Field 1 which has synthetic turf flooring.

Rental Hours and Revenues at Some of City of Airdrie Facilities for 2019			
	Rental Hours	Rentals Per	% of Revenues
Admissions/passholder visitations at Genesis Place	n/a	n/a	37
Genesis Place program participants	n/a	n/a	23
Aquatic user groups	4,408	Swimming Lane	1
Ball diamond user groups	n/a	Player	1
Hard surfaces (gymnasium) user groups	769	Gymnasium	1
Ice user group - boarded rinks	9,580	Rink	24
Indoor turf fields (boarded) user groups	2418	Indoor Field	5
Rectangular fields user groups	n/a	Player	<1
Other	n/a	n/a	7

**Genesis Place Visitations among Passholders and Drop In Admissions in 2019**



**Prime-Time Hours Utilization Rates**  
(sample – Nov. 2019)



Data source: City of Airdrie.

<sup>13</sup> It is also worth noting that rooms within the Town and Country Centre were used approximately 1,060 hours in 2019.

## Facility Development Needs within Airdrie

Indications of potential facility development needs for Airdrie have already been referenced in the previous sections of this report. However, additional information sources provide further evidence of needs such as perceptions of Airdrie residents and service providers, a comparative review with other communities, and various issues that are impacting the recreation sector.

### Residents' Perceptions of Needs

Residents were asked about new recreation facility development through the survey engagement processes. Several approaches were used to gain this input.

First, respondents were asked to identify the types of facilities they perceived were needed within the community. There were no response categories provided in the question so that top of mind impressions about needs could be obtained. Second, respondents were asked to identify new recreation facilities based on distributing \$100 to a list of different types of indoor and outdoor amenities.

Based on information presented in the tables on the next page, aquatic facilities, ice rinks, climbing walls/bouldering facilities, fitness gyms, seniors centres, racquet facilities, and field house/surface facilities were perceived to be the top indoor facility needs for Airdrie. Pathways/trails, parks, swimming pools/spray parks, dog parks, ice rinks, tennis/pickleball courts, and skateboard parks were commonly cited as priorities for outdoor facilities. It is worth noting that some survey respondents did not perceive a need for new facility development in the community.

Overall, however, survey respondents gave more emphasis to the development of new indoor facilities in the community compared to outdoor facilities when allocations of the available \$100 are examined in detail.

*Distribution of Perceived Needs Between Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities*



Based on aided response question, \$100 allocation among facility options.

Data source: Residents Survey.

### Residents' Perceptions of Recreation Facility Needs in Airdrie

Unaided <sup>14</sup>		% of Respondents
(only top facilities listed out of 104 facilities suggested)		
No additional facilities needed		24
Indoor	Aquatic/swimming pool	
	Swimming pool/aquatic (general)	30
	Aquatic facilities - leisure	5
	Aquatic facilities - flatwater	3
	Recreation centre/west side	15
	Ice rink (arena) facilities	12
	Climbing walls/bouldering facilities	8
	Racquetball/squash/wallyball courts	6
	Field house/surface facilities	5
	Fitness centres/gyms	4
	Gymnasiums	4
	Playgrounds	4
	Library	3
	Studios - fitness/group exercise	3
	Performing arts facilities	3
	Walking/running tracks	3
	Community hall/banquet facilities	2
	Pickleball courts	2
	Art galleries for art exhibits	2
	Tennis courts	2
	Studios - martial arts	2
	Visual arts centres for arts classes/programs	1
	Outdoor	Swimming pool
Spray parks		7
Pathways/trails		6
Tennis/pickleball courts		4
Parks/community parks		4
Skateboard parks		3
Ice rinks		3
Dog park/play park/swimming area		3
Bike trails/tracks		2
Ball diamonds		2
Artificial lake		2
Dog park (small dogs)		1
Disc golf course		1

Aided <sup>15</sup>		\$
(\$100 allocated among options)		
Indoor	Indoor aquatic facilities - leisure	13
	Indoor aquatic facilities - flatwater	9
	Indoor ice rink (arena) facilities	5
	Climbing walls/bouldering facilities	5
	Fitness centres/gyms	4
	Seniors centres	4
	Indoor playgrounds	3
	Performing arts facilities	3
	Gymnasiums	3
	Indoor walking/running tracks	3
	Indoor field house/surface facilities	2
	Racquetball/squash/wallyball courts	2
	Visual arts centres	2
	Art galleries for art exhibits	1
	Studios - dance	1
	Museums/interpretive centre facilities	1
	Community hall/banquet facilities	1
	Studios - fitness/group exercise	1
	Indoor trade show/conference/event facilities	1
Curling facilities	1	
Studios - martial arts	<1	
Outdoor	Outdoor pathways/trails	7
	Outdoor parks/community parks	4
	Outdoor spray parks	4
	Outdoor dog park (large dogs)	3
	Outdoor ice rinks	3
	Outdoor dog park (small dogs)	2
	Outdoor tennis/pickleball courts	2
	Outdoor playgrounds	2
	Outdoor ball diamonds	1
	Outdoor skateboard parks	1
	Outdoor swimming pool	1
Outdoor rectangular sport fields	1	
Outdoor court pads	<1	
Other	2	
Total	100	

Data source: Residents Survey.

<sup>14</sup> Unaided question - no options provided: Please ... indicate the kinds of additional recreation facilities, if any, that you think are needed in Airdrie to better serve your household.

<sup>15</sup> Aided question - list of options provided: If you were responsible for deciding what new recreation facilities would be developed in Airdrie and were given \$100 to spend, how much would you allocate to the following amenities (assuming that each costs the same amount to build).

## Service Provider Perceptions of Needs

Service providers were afforded an opportunity to state need for additional facilities to address future<sup>16</sup> program and service offerings.

A flatwater lane pool was identified by service providers, followed by an arts performance concert venue/theatre, ice rinks and slo-pitch diamonds. Other facilities were also cited.

It should be noted that the information presented to the right reflect numbers of times that each facility was mentioned by service providers. However, these perceptions need to be considered in relation to the levels of involvement among participants served by user groups. For instance, four swimming clubs indicated that flatwater lane pools are needed in the community, but these groups represent an estimated 300 to 400 participants, which is much lower than the hockey/ringette groups that serve approximately 4,000 to 5,000 participants. Similarly, ball diamonds user groups provide services to 1,500 to 2,000 participants and indoor rectangular field user groups comprise 2,000 to 2,500 participants. As such, number of mentions does not necessarily quantify the need for recreation facility development within the community.

### Perceived Facility Needs among Service Providers

Flatwater lane pool	✓✓✓✓
Arts performance concert venue/theatre	✓✓✓
Ice rinks	✓✓✓
Slo-pitch diamonds	✓✓✓
Indoor rectangular fields	✓✓
Meeting spaces	✓✓
Community gardens	✓
Gymnasiums	✓
Museum/interpretive centre (additional space)	✓
Pickleball - indoor courts	✓
Pickleball - outdoor courts	✓
Seniors centre (expanded space)	✓

✓ denotes number of mentions among service provider survey participants.

Data source: Service Providers Survey.

The City of Airdrie has allocation policies such as the Arena Booking and Ice Allocation Policy (P-01/2007), The Bert Church Theatre Booking Policy (P-01/2009), and Playing Fields Booking Policy (P-05/2009), which govern times and priorities for booking facilities. It is also in the process of developing a policy for allocating space and time for Municipally operated indoor recreation facilities to sports and/or special events for seasonal contracts. It is to be based on evidence-based Long-Term Athlete Development models developed by national sports associations in association with the Canadian Sport for Life Society. These policies will need to be consulted when identifying potential future use of facilities within Airdrie.

<sup>16</sup> Existing and over the next 5 to 10 years.

## Comparative Review

The inventory of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in Airdrie presented earlier was compared to those of other similar communities in Canada including St. Albert, AB., Sherwood Park, AB., Newmarket, ON., Lethbridge, AB., Red Deer, AB., and Kelowna, BC.<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of the comparative review is to provide a broader perspective of recreation facility development by considering how other municipalities have organized recreation infrastructure to meet residents' needs. Information from the comparisons is presented over the next few pages.

Based on analysis of the data from the comparative review, along with estimates of service levels (see Appendices) and in consideration of Airdrie's demographic profile (high levels of children and youth under 20 years of age), notable observed gaps for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities have been identified for Airdrie over the next five to ten years (see tables below).

### Notable Findings Observed Gaps Compared to Other Communities

Indoor Facilities	Notable Gaps
<b>Aquatic</b>	
Flatwater pool	✓✓
Leisure pool	✓
Wave pool	✓
Therapeutic - Hot tub/whirlpool	✓
Outdoor pool	✓✓
<b>Ice</b>	
Performance ice rink	✓
Leisure Ice	✓
<b>Other</b>	
Library	✓
Fitness centre	✓
Climbing Wall/Bouldering	✓
Banquet/Halls/Rooms	✓✓
Racquet Courts	✓
Indoor playground	✓

Outdoor Facilities	Notable Gaps
<b>Diamond</b>	
Total	✓
<b>Disc Golf</b>	
# of holes	✓
<b>Racquet Courts</b>	
Tennis/Pickleball	✓✓
<b>Skateboard Park</b>	
Total	✓
<b>Sport Fields</b>	
Synthetic turf field	✓
<b>Spray/Splash Parks</b>	
Total	✓

✓denotes extent of observed gap with other communities.

<sup>17</sup> See supplementary report, City of Airdrie, *Future of Recreation, Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment, Presentation of Methodology and Summary of Results*, January 2022 for methodology of selecting comparative communities.

## Aquatics

	Sherwood						
	Airdrie	St. Albert	Park	Newmarket	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Kelowna
Population (2016 Federal Census)	61,581	65,589	70,618	84,244	92,729	100,418	127,380
<b>Indoor Facilities</b>	1	2	3	2	5	4	3
<b>Flat water</b>							
Lanes (25m)	6	8	26	14	28	15	14
Lanes (50m)					8		8
Lanes (25m equivalent)	6	8	26	14	44	15	30
Diving boards/tank	✓	✓	✓		✓(2)	✓(2)	✓
<b>Leisure water</b>							
Leisure pool (Zero entry leisure/combined flat/teach/tot warm)	1	3	3	2	2	4	1
Water slide	1	3	1	1		4	3
Lazy river	1	1	1		1	1	1
Spray park/play structures	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Flow rider					1		1
Climbing wall	1	1			1		
Swing rope			1		2		
Wave pool			1		1	1	1
<b>Therapeutic</b>							
Hot tub/whirlpool	1	2	3	2	3	3	2
Steam room	1	1	3		1	3	1
Sauna		1		1	1		
<b>Outdoor Facilities</b>		1		1	2	1	(lakes)
Lanes (25m equivalent)		5			4	12	
Leisure pool		1		1	1	1	
Water slides					2		
Diving board(s)		✓			✓	✓	
Spray/splash park	1	1	4	3	3	2	3

Note: The reference (2) represents dive boards/tank features at two facilities.

## Ice

	Sherwood						
	Airdrie	St. Albert	Park	Newmarket	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Kelowna
Population (2016 Federal Census)	61,581	65,589	70,618	84,244	92,729	100,418	127,380
<b>Indoor Ice Skating Facilities</b>	3	2	5	3	7	5	4
<b>Boarded rinks</b> (including performance rinks)							
NHL or Non-Standardized	5	5	7	6	8	6	6
Olympic				1			
<b>Total</b>	5	5	7	7	8	6	6
<b>Performance rink attributes</b>							
Facilities		1	1	1	1	1	2
Seating		2,023	1,800	2,500	5,900	7,819	6,886 2,600
Junior A, AA, AAA		AJHL	AJHL		WHL	WHL	WHL
<b>Leisure rinks</b>							
Surfaces		1	1				
<b>Curling Rink Facilities</b>	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Sheets	8	6	8	6	10	16	12

### Indoor Turf Fields and Hard Surfaces

	Sherwood						
	Airdrie	St. Albert	Park	Newmarket	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Kelowna
Population (2016 Federal Census)	61,581	65,589	70,618	84,244	92,729	100,418	127,380
<b>Indoor Turf Field Facilities</b>	1	1	1	1	1	2	1**
<b>Attributes</b>							
Boarded	2	2	2		2	2	2
Non-boarded (boarded equivalent)			*	2		4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
* currently planning a full-non-boarded field							
** Indoor domes have closed in Kelowna. Facility with 8 fields located in West Kelowna							
<b>Indoor hard surfaces (gymnasiums, non-school)</b>	1	1	1	1	3	2	1
<b>Surfaces</b>	2	3	4	1	6	4	1

### Other Indoor Facilities

	Sherwood						
	Airdrie	St. Albert	Park	Newmarket	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Kelowna
Population (2016 Federal Census)	61,581	65,589	70,618	84,244	92,729	100,418	127,380
<b>Library/Branches</b>	1	1	1	1	2	3	3
<b>Fitness Centre (Studios)/Running Tracks</b>							
Public fitness centres	1	1	2	1	1	3	4
Private fitness centres/studios	15	22	29	46	46	25	101
Indoor running tracks	1	1	1	1	1	2	3
<b>Studio/Gymnastics Centres</b>							
Dance	5	4	5	10	10	7	16
Gymnastics	1	2	1	3	3	4	5
Martial arts	6	14	8	7	8	11	19
<b>Climbing Wall/Bouldering</b>							
Public			1		(university)	1	
Private		2		1	1	1	2
<b>Banquet/Hall/Rooms</b>	4	12	7	5	3	8	9
Spaces in public facilities	5	18	14	12	10	13	19
Persons capacity (largest room)	490	500	500	200	200	n/a	250
<b>Racquet Courts</b>							
Squash		1 (squash, racquetball, wallyball)	6 (squash, racquetball, wallyball)	2	3 (squash, racquetball, wallyball)	6 (squash, racquetball, wallyball)	4
Racquetball							3
<b>Indoor Playgrounds</b>	1	2	2	5	3	4	8
Public	1	2	2		1		
Private				5	4	4	8
<b>Performance Auditorium</b>	1	1	1	1	2	3	3
Seating capacity	377	498	489	400	487, 180	704, 590, 200	853, 326, 200

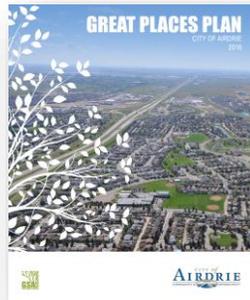
### Outdoor Facilities

Population (2016 Federal Census)	Sherwood						
	Airdrie 61,581	St. Albert 65,589	Park 70,618	Newmarket 84,244	Lethbridge 92,729	Red Deer 100,418	Kelowna 127,380
<b>Rectangular Fields</b>							
Rectangular fields	53	47	56	21	103	81	n/a (2010)
Rectangular fields with synthetic turf		1	1	1		1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Diamonds</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>n/a (2010)</b>
<b>Athletic/Running Tracks (400m)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Disc Golf Courses</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Holes	9	9	18	18	36	18	9
* Temporary							
<b>Outdoor Ice Rink</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>2</b>
Boarded	3	27	9	2		38	2
Unboarded	3	4	8	1	4	40	
Oval						1	
<b>Racquet Courts</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>
Tennis (may also allow pickleball)	6	18	12	24	18	48	15
Pickleball (dedicated courts)	4	18	8	3	1	20	13
<b>Skateboard Park</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>BMX Park/Trails</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Spray/Splash Parks</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

## Other Sources of Identified Needs

In 2016, the City of Airdrie commissioned the *Great Places Plan* to identify policies for open spaces within the community.

Within the document, various long-term planning initiatives are developed for outdoor recreation facilities in Airdrie. In follow-up to the *Great Places Plan*, a *Sports Field Management Plan* was developed in 2019, which identified the need for the following outdoor amenities over a 10-year period:



- Rectangular fields (+6)
- Ball diamonds (+6)
- Boarded skating rinks (+1)
- Non-boarded skating surfaces (+2)
- Pickleball courts (+1)
- Tennis courts (+1)

An additional study was commissioned by the City of Airdrie titled the *Artificial Turf Sportsfield Feasibility Study, 2021*, that suggested further development of Ed Eggerer Athletic Park is possible to enhance its capacity as the primary sportsfield facility within the community. Suggested improvements include developing an artificial turf field, field lighting, and storage spaces, with updates to the press box, event operation centre, athletic track, and change rooms.

A *Youth Needs Assessment Study* was conducted in 2017 for the City and included a survey of Airdrie youth. Some of the facilities (or activities associated with facilities) that respondents perceived as missing within Airdrie included (listed in order of times mentioned):<sup>18</sup>

- Climbing wall
- Trampoline park
- Arts/performing arts facility
- Multipurpose room
- Cultural centre
- Dog park
- Community garden
- Native friendship centre
- Outdoor athletic field
- Outdoor ice rink
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Parks
- Running track
- Splash park

<sup>18</sup> Additional activities and amenities were identified in the study. The presented list shows facilities that municipalities typically develop or facilitate.

## Other Issues to Consider

The past couple of years have been challenging for the recreation industry, as well as society in general, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Nonetheless, there are various issues and

trends from recent years that are worth noting as potential considerations for new facility development in Airdrie.<sup>19</sup>

## Notable Recreation Industry Issues

### Activities/Programming:

- The most recent version of the Alberta Recreation Survey, which was conducted in 2017, measures levels of household participation in recreation activities among Albertans. Some levels are similar to those in Airdrie based on the engagement process surveys conducted for this Study, while others have notable differences.
  - Similar levels:
    - Walking for pleasure (83%)
    - Swimming/aquafitness in pools (54%)
    - Bicycling (54%)
    - Fitness/aerobics (52%)
    - Soccer (20%)
    - Basketball (17%)
    - Softball/baseball (14%)
    - Badminton (14%)
    - Volleyball (12%)
    - Wall climbing (10%)
    - Tennis (9%)
    - Martial arts (8%)
    - Football (6%)
  - Lower levels among Albertans:
    - Ice skating (not hockey) (29%)
    - Hockey/ringette (17%/1%)
    - Gymnastics (10%)
    - Skateboarding (8%)
  - Higher levels among Albertans:
    - Attending a fair/festival/cultural event (71%)
    - Attending a live performance (70%)
    - Visiting a historic site or museum (57%)
    - Visiting an art gallery or exhibit (33%)
- Top new recreation activities among Albertans, as reported in the 2017 Alberta Recreation Survey, include Yoga, gym/fitness, dancing, martial arts, and volleyball.
- For the past decade or so, general participation throughout North America in fitness (including group exercise) and movement (Yoga/Pilates) has been increasing, which is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. Other notable recreation activities experiencing increases in popularity include dance, pickleball, badminton, wellness and support programs, and personal development training.
- Notable programming adjustments implemented by recreation service providers in 2021 due to Covid-19 include online programming and converting indoor to outdoor programming.

### Facilities/Operations:

- Top amenities planned for development by United States recreation providers in 2020 and 2021 include:
  - Indoor:
    - Exercise studios
    - Indoor courts for sports like basketball and volleyball
    - Classrooms and meeting rooms
    - Synthetic turf sport fields
    - Fitness centres
    - Concession areas
  - Outdoor:
    - Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment
    - Splash play areas
    - Playgrounds
    - Park shelters
    - Disc golf courses
    - Walking and hiking trails
    - Bike trails
    - Dog parks
    - Sport courts
- It is increasingly recognized among recreation facility operators that rooms, lobbies, and other spaces need to balance the needs and experiences of all users, regardless of age. While it can be appealing to create more welcoming décor for children and youth, it can be beneficial to ensure that environments are also engaging to all ages. Spaces that are designed for multi-generations ensure greater attractiveness to support revenue generating potential.
- Another trend that has developed within recreation facilities involves using social or common areas as programming space. Lobbies, sitting areas, spectator viewing areas, corridors, etc. are being designed to enable programming, activities, or events to occur. Before starting to use these spaces, consideration needs to be given to programming and spectator needs (e.g., noise reduction, space attractiveness, equipment or staging mobility, flooring appropriateness, seating availability, wireless Internet provision, ventilation and airflow, etc.).
- Many service providers are acknowledging the value that arts and culture, intellectual and spiritual, as well as recreation pursuits can have in creating a sense of place and support resilient and sustainable communities. This concept is further enhanced when residents are not simply considered as passive consumers, but also encouraged to be providers, stakeholders, and contributors to the resources in the community (e.g., program instructors, organizers, volunteers, etc.).

<sup>19</sup> Sources: Active Alberta Coalition, Alberta Government, Canadian Architect, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, Government of Canada, and National Recreation and Parks.

Additional issues that should be considered for the development of new indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in Airdrie:

- It is worth re-emphasizing the prevalence of children and youth that reside within Airdrie. This characteristic likely explains why involvement in activities such as ice skating, hockey/ringette, gymnastics, and skateboarding is higher in Airdrie households than among Albertans.<sup>20</sup> If past patterns that have been observed about new residents to Airdrie being families with children and youth continues, then the significance of this segment within the community will likely persist over the foreseeable future. Recreation facility planning and development should acknowledge that certain activities and interests are likely to be greater within Airdrie than what typically occurs in other communities.
- Aquatics may be one area that needs consideration based on this particular demographic characteristic; especially since additional aquatic facilities have been identified as being a perceived need within Airdrie. There are various amenities that can comprise aquatic facilities. For instance, when survey respondents were asked about activities or amenities that they thought household members would use in a new indoor pool facility, foremost responses included taking swimming lessons, generally having fun in the water, and playing in a wave pool. Such interests are likely representative of the prevalence of children and youth in the community.

Interests in New Aquatics Facilities in Airdrie	
	% of Respondents
Take swimming lessons (F)	34
Generally have fun in the water	34
Sit in a hot tub/steam room	33
Play in a wave pool (L)	32
Swim laps for fitness (F)	25
Use water slides (L)	23
Participate in aquasize or other group fitness activities (F)	21
Use for therapeutic purposes (F)	15
Play in a lazy river (L)	14
Play in a spray, play shower, tipping water bucket area (L)	7
Be a member of competitive swimming, synchronized, waterpolo, etc. club (F)	4
Be a member of a diving club (F)	1

Note: F represents flatwater and L leisure water.

Data source: Residents Survey.

<sup>20</sup> Based on comparing the results of the engagement survey results from this study to the 2017 Alberta Recreation Survey.

Planning aquatics facilities can be challenging due to competing needs and interests, especially when considering that communities have limited resources to invest in recreation facilities. Flatwater amenities such as a laned pool can accommodate various opportunities such as life skills (swimming, lifeguarding, water safety lessons), fitness (aqua-size, lane swimming, etc.), competitive swimming, and general fun in the water. However, even within these interests there are conflicting issues. For example, lane and competitive swimming proponents generally prefer cooler water temperatures, longer lanes, and deeper water basins than participants of swimming lessons, water fitness programs, and generally having fun in the water.

Costs, both capital and operating, are another factor that influences decisions about aquatic facility development. Some amenities require greater investment than others such as a 25m is typically less expensive to build and operate than a 50m flatwater pool due to overall scope to build and costs for lifeguarding. Similarly, various leisure water amenities can be more costly to build and operate such as wave pools, lazy rivers, and water slides, depending on scope, design, configuration, etc.

It is worth noting that 25m flatwater pools are much more prominent than 50m pools in Alberta. For instance, in southern Alberta, there are 25m pools in almost all cities and towns, while there are only five 50m pools with three being in Calgary, one in Lethbridge, and one in Medicine Hat. Of the five 50m pools, two are situated at post secondary schools (University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge), which address recreation, competition, varsity, and academic needs and interests.

Some communities in Alberta have outdoor swimming pool facilities. These types of facilities can have flatwater amenities, leisure water features and structures, or both. For the most part, these facilities operate for six to eight weeks a year, which is considerably less than indoor aquatic facilities that operate year-round. However, outdoor pool facilities contribute to the quality of life of a community, particularly for residents that do not have access to lake resorts or properties. It is worth mentioning that an outdoor pool surfaced as a notable interest among Airdrie households even though it was not directly addressed in the residents engagement survey.



- The perceived need for indoor ice arenas is another example that may be influenced by the population profile of the community. Boarded indoor rinks were commonly cited as being needed in the resident and service provider surveys, but not necessarily through the findings of the comparative review. This inconsistency may be influenced by the higher proportions of children and youth that reside in Airdrie.<sup>21</sup>

It is also worth noting that the Plainsman Arena has served the community since 1974. Decisions are likely needed in the foreseeable future to determine if further investment is warranted to keep the facility open or replacing it with a new arena is more advisable. It is much more common for new arenas to have (or planned for) at least two sheets of ice to benefit from economies of scale for construction and operating. Multi-ice sheet arenas are also advantageous for attracting tournaments and competitive events than single-sheet arenas.



A performance ice arena with substantial spectator seating capacity emerged as a potential gap within the community based on the comparative review. Also, a few comments provided in the residents engagement survey revealed nominal interest in having a performance arena within the community. Typically, in Alberta, these types of facilities support higher level competitive sports such as hockey teams in the Alberta Junior Hockey League or the Western Hockey League. Based on the research conducted for this study, there were no plans identified from any organization to secure a team from these leagues for Airdrie. Performance arenas are also used to host other events and functions such as concerts, trade shows, conferences, etc.

Planning for a performance arena needs to consider potential uses, but also other issues. Large spectator or visitor events typically require sufficient vehicular access and parking, multiple access points, seating configurations that facilitate revenue generation, concession accessibility, staging supports, retail and accommodation support, etc. Some of these issues may not be compatible with a highly used multi-purpose recreation centre located within a residential precinct of the community.

<sup>21</sup> Approximately 31% of the Airdrie population is under 20 years of age, while the highest proportion among comparable communities is 25%.

- Over the past few decades, new indoor recreation facilities in Alberta have accommodated novel amenities (beyond flatwater pools, ice rinks, gymnasiums, fitness centres, studios, multipurpose rooms, curling rinks) such as unboarded leisure ice, climbing walls/bouldering facilities, indoor playgrounds, and combined flatwater/leisure pool basins. These types of amenities have had mixed success in terms of demand and use, revenue generation compared to costs, operating synergies with other functions within the facility, etc.

In terms of the combined flatwater/leisure pool basins, there can be conflicting uses for those who want to lane swim and those wanting to enjoy the leisure aspects of the pool.

One of the benefits of offering these novel amenities is the perceived opportunity for those that purchase passes or memberships at a recreation centre. The greater the number of opportunities available at a recreation centre, the higher the value to purchase a pass or membership, which is an important consideration given the experiences at Genesis Place. It can also provide incentive for recreation providers to charge higher prices for passes or memberships, but also drop in admissions.

- Indoor racquet sport (racquetball, squash) spaces emerged as an interest within the community for a new multi-purpose recreation centre. Currently, there are no courts available in Airdrie. These types of spaces reached their peak in popularity in the 1970's and 1980's with the development of racquet clubs and the increased interest in fitness among the population. Since then, there has been a fairly steady decline in demand for the activities associated with these facilities.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in the 1988 Alberta Recreation Survey, 16% of respondents reported a least one player of racquetball/squash within the household, which declined to 3% in 2017. As a result, many public recreation facilities throughout Alberta that initially included these spaces when buildings were constructed have decommissioned them or use them as alternate studio spaces for fitness instruction programs, spin cycle classes, and cardio/weight training equipment. Recently, the advent of wallyball has created another use for these spaces, but demand for this emerging activity is fairly low.

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<sup>22</sup> sportsver.com.



- Changes are being considered in the development of new indoor turf field facilities that accommodate indoor soccer activities. In the past, it was common for these facilities in Alberta to have boarded fields that could support multiple sport opportunities. Recently, however, national soccer organizations have advocated for indoor turf fields to be non-boarded to foster consistency of play across the country. As such, many new and existing indoor turf fields in Alberta have developed or have been retrofitted to non-boarded field configurations.
- Based on some of the interests identified in this Study, there may be a need for additional rooms and multipurpose spaces in the community. Typically, new multi-purpose recreation facilities incorporate some of these spaces. However, it is worth noting that the new public library currently being planned for the community is expected to also have multipurpose spaces available for use.
- Tournaments are an important consideration when planning recreation facilities. These events attract visitors from outside the community, which can be beneficial to local industry and the economy. Typically, tournaments are organized for local/regional, provincial, national, and international competitions. Usually, the higher the level of competition, the more complex and rigorous the specifications and regulations are for playing surfaces, facility configurations, and community infrastructure, all of which involve costs and investments. Some of the factors to consider when developing recreation facilities to attract tournaments should include potential frequency of hosting tournaments,<sup>23</sup> requirements and costs to develop and maintain playing surfaces to standards over the long term, and available community infrastructure to accommodate visitors during tournament events.

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<sup>23</sup> For example, local/regional tournaments may occur weekly, monthly, or annually, while provincial, national, or international tournaments usually come to a community periodically, such as every five, ten, or more years, if at all.

- Municipal governments have typically been involved in the development, ownership, and operation of all of the different recreation facilities and amenities that have been examined within this study process. Overall, the smaller the population of a community, the more likelihood of municipal government involvement. Nonetheless, in some cases, municipal governments work in partnership with private operators, community or sport organizations, or other governmental organizations to develop, own, or operate recreation facilities.

There are, however, examples of private operators owning and operating recreation facilities that support publicly accessible programming with no or minimal support from municipal governments (see table). In some cases, municipal governments will compete directly with the private operators. This typically occurs when there are sufficient opportunities for all stakeholders to incur profits from the provision of services (such as in a larger urban community) or there is a gap that is not fully being served by private operators.

Provision of Publicly-Accessible Recreation Facilities by Private Operators with Little to No Municipal Government Involvement				
Facilities	Observed Commonality			
	Common	Somewhat Common	Not Very Common	Not Common
Indoor	Aquatic flatwater			
	Aquatic leisure			Amusement Parks
	Arts/performance facilities			
	Banquet/hall/room/spaces	Hotels		
	Boarded ice rinks			Outside AB
	Climbing Wall/bouldering facilities			
	Dance studios			
	Fitness centres/studios			
	Gymnasitics facilities			
	Gymnasiums			
	Indoor Playgrounds			
	Leisure ice			
	Library/Branches			
	Martial arts studios			
	Racquet Courts	Fitness Centres, Racquet Clubs		
Turf field facilities				
Outdoor	Aquatic pool			Amusement Parks, Slo-pitch, Associaitons
	Ball diamonds			
	BMX Park/Trails			
	Disc golf courses			Clubs
	Outdoor ice rinks			Malls
	Rectangular sport fields			
	Skateboard Park			
	Spray/splash park		Amusement Parks	
	Tennis/pickleball racquet courts			Clubs

Source: Industry observations by consultants.

Unless commonly offered by private operators (see 'common' column in table), it may be challenging for municipal governments to expect or rely on private operators to step in to develop, own, and operate publicly accessible recreation facilities to address facility gaps within the community.

- During the comparative review conducted for this study, it was noted that all of the communities involved have one premier outdoor sport field venue with higher quality playing surfaces (or artificial turf fields), lighting, press box/operation centre, grandstands, dressing rooms, washroom facilities that addresses the sports needs of the community. In Airdrie, Ed Eggerer Athletic Park serves this purpose. This issue is introduced as some stakeholders consulted for this study suggested that a similar facility should be developed on the site of the new multi-purpose recreation centre in southwest Airdrie.
- Increasingly, recreation and social infrastructure planning is emphasizing seamless transitions between indoor settings and outdoor environments. Examples of this concept include indoor spaces connecting to outdoor public event or activity areas, pathways or trails leading to community amenities, indoor child play spaces coordinated with outdoor play structures, shaping or forming building exteriors to the local environment or character of a community, etc. This type of complementary space planning can optimize capital spending and create a range of social and community opportunities for service and program provision.



## Implications of Recreation Needs Assessment

Previous sections of this Recreation Needs Assessment Study have emphasized key recreation behaviours, interests, and expectations within Airdrie, as well pertinent information from other sources, for new facility development within Airdrie.

The following tables summarize the indoor and outdoor facility gaps that have been observed from the findings of various analysis presented in this document.

Gap Monitor of Indoor Facilities						
	Residents Survey	Service Providers/ Stakeholders	Youth Needs Assessment	Comparative Review	Operations/ Utilization/ Revenues	Priority
Arts/Performance Facilities	■	■ ■ ■	■		■	11
<b>Aquatics</b>						
Flatwater	■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■		■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■	1
Leisure	■ ■ ■ ■			■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■	3
Theraupitic	■			■		14
<b>Hard Surfaces</b>						
Gymnasiums	■	■ ■			■	5
<b>Ice</b>						
Boarded ice rinks	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■		■	■ ■ ■	2
Leisure ice	■			■		14
Indoor turf fields	■	■ ■			■ ■	5
<b>Other</b>						
Art galleries	■				■	17
Banquet/hall/rooms	■	■	■	■	■ ■	4
Climbing wall/bouldering	■ ■		■ ■ ■	■		8
Curling rinks	■					20
Fitness centres	■ ■	■			■ ■	5
Gymnasitics centres	■					20
Indoor playgrounds	■			■	■	12
Indoor trade show/events	■	■				15
Library branches	■					n/a*
Museum/interpretive	■	■			■	14
Racquet courts	■			■		17
Running tracks	■	■	■		■	10
Seniors centres	■	■			■	12
Studios	■	■			■ ■	9

Note: Each marker represents an observed level of gap identified through the research and engagement processes. Priorities based on number of sources of markers with emphasis given to markers for comparative review and operational/utilization/revenues.

\*Already budgeted and under development.

Gap Monitor of Outdoor Facilities							
	Residents Survey	Service Providers/ Stakeholders	Youth Needs Assessment	Comparative Review	Great Places Plan	Sport Field Management Plan/Artificial Turf Sport Field	Priority
BMX track	■						15
Diamonds	■	■ ■ ■		■	■	■	1
Community gardens	■	■	■	n/a			12
Court pads	■	■		n/a	■		5
Disc golf	■			■			5
Dog parks	■		■	n/a			14
Ice rinks	■	■	■		■	■	4
Outdoor pool	■ ■ ■		■				8
Parks/community parks	■ ■	■	■	n/a			8
Playgrounds	■			n/a			15
Pathways/trails	■ ■ ■	■		n/a			8
Running track	■	■	■				12
Skateparks	■			■			5
Sport fields	■ ■		■	■	■	■	2
Spray/splash parks	■ ■ ■		■				8
Tennis/pickleball courts	■ ■	■		■	■	■	2

Note: Each marker represents an observed level of gap identified through the research and engagement processes. Priorities based on number and sources of markers with emphasis given to markers for comparative review and Great Places Plan and other planning documents.

It is recognized that some amenities may have higher priority on a neighbourhood basis such as playgrounds and pathways/trails.

An objective of this Recreation Needs Assessment Study is to identify considerations for scale and mix of facility components and provide a basis for scope of a new multi-purpose recreation facility and a new regional park within Airdrie, based on high levels of expression of need within the community.

On the next few pages, these considerations are presented. However, there are additional stages planning needed to fully assess feasibility and prepare develop designs for these facilities.

The following figure highlights further analysis and evaluation that is needed to clarify functional program components and elements that will be designed into the new facilities. The findings of this study provide an exploratory foundation for this additional planning of the new multi-purpose recreation facility and regional park.

**Recreation Facility Investment Decision Inputs**



The following table presents considerations for the new indoor multi-purpose recreation facility

in southwest Airdrie, based on high level expressions of needs.<sup>24</sup>

Considerations Based on High Level Expression of Needs for a New Indoor Recreation Facility			
Facility Components <sup>24</sup>	Elements	Comments	
Aquatics	Flatwater	▪ 8 to 10 lane, 25m pool	▪ Provides opportunities for programming, fitness, training, competitions, etc.
		▪ spectator seating	
	Leisure	▪ zero depth entry, teaching, tot pool	▪ Contributes to life skills programming.
		▪ Aquatic climbing wall	▪ Could be used as a warm up pool for competitions.
		▪ Spray park features/play structures	▪ Offers a variety of leisure opportunities for all ages.
		▪ Water slides (2)	
		▪ Lazy river	
▪ Swing rope			
Therapeutic	▪ Hot tub/whirl pool		
▪ Steam room			
Fitness Centre	Fitness gym	▪ 1,395 - 1,860 m <sup>2</sup> (15,000 - 20,000 ft <sup>2</sup> ), cardio and strength training equipment	▪ Slightly bigger than space in Genesis Place.
	Studios	▪ 2 fitness/studio spaces 110 - 170m <sup>2</sup> (1,200 - ,800 ft2), multipurpose flexible flooring	
	Track	▪ Walking/running track	
Ice	Boarded ice	▪ 3 boarded NHL sized ice surface, 61m x 26m (200ft x 85 ft), various seating capacity	▪ Community rinks, multiple sheets beneficial for tournaments. ▪ One sheet represents replacement for Plainsman Arena. ▪ Performance arena might be considered at other location.
	Leisure ice	▪ Oblong freeform shape, unboarded rink, 40 to 80 capacity	▪ Separate from boarded rinks. ▪ Could be used for pleasure skating, as well as lessons.
Indoor hard surface/ field	Hard surface	▪ 1,300 - 1,590 m <sup>2</sup> (14,000 - 16,000 ft <sup>2</sup> ), multipurpose flooring, non-boarded, built in volleyball and racquet net posts, basketball net systems	▪ Gymnasium style - 2 playing surfaces. ▪ Could be wood or other flooring.
	Turf field	▪ 745 m <sup>2</sup> (7,000 - 8,000 ft <sup>2</sup> ), non-boarded or boarded synthetic turf surface	▪ Synthetic turf surface. ▪ Approximately 1/4 size of regulation outdoor field.
Indoor playground		▪ 110 - 185 m <sup>2</sup> (1,200 - 2,000 ft <sup>2</sup> ), play structures, climbing surface	▪ Similar in size to space in Genesis Place.
Multipurpose/meeting rooms		▪ Various multipurpose/meeting rooms	
Outdoor sport field		▪ Full sports field for soccer, football, lacrosse	▪ May not include grandstands, press box, etc.
Passive outdoor features		▪ Seating, picnic tables, and other outdoor spaces	▪ Provide passive/social/community programming options.
Other:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administration spaces</li> <li>▪ Common areas/social spaces/circulation</li> <li>▪ Support spaces</li> <li>▪ Childminding</li> <li>▪ Lease spaces</li> </ul>	
Missing:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wave pool</li> <li>▪ Climbing wall/bouldering facility</li> <li>▪ Racquet/Wallyball courts</li> <li>▪ Banquet hall/rooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Considerations include costs, operational requirements, potential utilization, potential for private operators.</li> <li>▪ Possibly smaller wave pool, but may not address interests.</li> <li>▪ Racquet court might be considered with studio spaces.</li> <li>▪ Banquet hall more viable at another location.</li> </ul>

<sup>24</sup> Colors in left column distinguish different facility categories such as aquatics, fitness centres, ice, etc.

High level expressions of needs for the new regional park in northeast Airdrie includes:

Considerations Based on High Level Expression of Needs for a New Regional Park			
Facility Components	Elements	Comments	
Aquatics (outdoor)	Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>zero depth entry pool with swimming basin that could be rectangular, oblong, oval, etc. in shape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides leisure swimming opportunities.</li> <li>Passive park features for social/sunbathing opportunities.</li> </ul>
	Spray park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spray park features/play structures</li> </ul>	
	Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playground structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structures to complement spray park and pool users.</li> </ul>
Ball diamonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quad diamond complex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For softball/fastball/slo-pitch.</li> </ul>	
Hardsurface court pads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basketball nets, volleyball nets.</li> </ul>		
Disc golf course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 or 18 hole golf course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to existing temporary course.</li> </ul>	
Passive outdoor features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picnic tables, fire pits, and shelters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide passive/social/community programming options.</li> </ul>	
Racquet courts	Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23.8m by 8.2m (78 ft by 27 ft) courts</li> </ul>	
	Pickleball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1m by 13.4m (20 ft by 44 ft) courts</li> </ul>	
Skateboard park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bowl, decks, ramps, half-pipes, rails, etc.</li> </ul>		



The indoor and outdoor recreation needs assessment was commissioned to gather broad public input about the needs and preferences for future facilities in Airdrie and to engage key community stakeholders to understand their specific needs. The findings are intended to inform and assist Airdrie City Council about the broadest expression of needs and priorities for recreation facilities in the community. Further analysis has provided considerations for the future Southwest Recreation Centre and Northeast Regional Park based on high level expressions of needs.

The needs for additional recreation facilities within Airdrie are extensive and, through this study, immediate gaps have been identified within many facility categories for recreation. These gaps have arisen from the rapid population growth that has occurred within the community over the past decade or so.<sup>25</sup> As the community continues to grow, additional gaps are going to develop.

The considerations presented within this report for the Southwest Recreation Centre and Northeast Regional Park tend to emphasize community level recreation needs. This is mainly due to the input provided from the community, but also the extent of deficits that exist for these kinds of amenities, operational considerations, and other issues.

It is recognized that there are other needs for facilities within the community. For example, the research reveals that a performance arena (and/or event centre) is lacking in Airdrie based on its population size. These types of facilities have many community benefits, some of which include meeting the recreation needs of residents. However, to determine how this need might specifically or effectively be addressed within the community is beyond the scope of this project. More detailed and purposeful consideration about potential uses, optimal locations, transportation and vehicular access, revenue generation opportunities, expectations of high level sport teams that may use the facility, and many other issues need to be addressed.

Similarly, further consideration should be undertaken for amenities associated with the Northeast Regional Park. The available list of high level expression of needs identifies key gaps that exist within the community. Further planning is needed to identify the purpose of the new Northeast Regional Park and consider if the amenities that have been identified fit within its scope or are better suited at other outdoor spaces within the community.

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<sup>25</sup> Note: Statistics Canada, Federal Census, reported Airdrie's population to be 74,100 in 2021 (released February 9, 2022).



# Appendices

Note: Detailed supporting information about methodology and findings from the research and engagement processes conducted for this Study is documented in a supplementary report titled *Future of Recreation, Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment, Presentation of Methodology and Summary of Results*, January 2022.

## Project Objectives:

- Identification of current and future trends for recreation.
- Consultation with City administration, its internal working group and community users.
- Review similar recreation facilities and services in Airdrie and surrounding region.
- Assessment of Airdrie facilities in terms of usage trends, community demand and gap analysis.
- Completion of a statistically representative survey of community usage and satisfaction with select current, municipal cultural and recreation facilities.
- Structured qualitative stakeholder engagement to further identify and clarify proposed future needs, demand, and usage.
- Completion of a statistically representative assessment of community needs and priorities for future municipal facilities and related recommendations.
- Consultation with City administration, its internal working group, and community users.
- Structured qualitative stakeholder engagement to further identify and clarify proposed future needs, demand, and usage.
- Report on the survey findings, balancing community needs and priorities for future municipal facilities to City administration.
- Recommendations on the scale and mix of components to establish the scope of future preliminary design of a new multi-purpose recreation facility based on an assessment of community needs and future priorities for the use of the new facility, including an order of magnitude estimate for design and construction, which is needed to advance the budget.
- Presentation of an interim report to the City's Director of Community Services and final report to City Council.

## Family Life Stage Definitions

A series of questions were presented to survey respondents to enable segmentation of households into family life stage categories.

The family life stage model is based on the concept that most families progress through a number of distinct phases throughout their existence. The key factor used to determine family life stage was household composition (ages of household members). Definitions of the six segments of the family life stage distribution are:

- **Young adults (without children/youth)** – the adults are primarily under 45 years of age, and there are no children or youth present in the household.
- **Early nest** – the children/youth residing in the household are primarily under 13 years of age, and adults are comprised of any age.
- **Nest with youth** – the children/youth residing in the household are primarily between 13 and 17 years of age, and adults are comprised of any age.
- **Late nest** – the children/youth residing in the household are between 18 and 24 years of age, and adults are comprised of any age.
- **Mid-aged adults (without children/youth)** – the adults are primarily between 45 and 64 years of age, and there are no children or youth present in the household; and
- **Seniors (without children/youth)** – the adults are primarily 65 years of age or older, and there are no children or youth present in the household.

## Additional Analysis of Residents Survey Data

Average number of activities among Airdrie households (among 61 different types)

Perceived Activity Levels	Mean	Median
Very active	17.3814	16.0000
Somewhat active	12.0891	11.0000
Not very active	8.0800	7.0000
Not at all active	1.8235	1.0000
Total	12.4158	11.0000

Family Life Stage	Mean	Median
Young adults	11.2115	10.5000
Early Nest	16.9200	16.0000
Nest with Youth	14.4569	13.0000
Late Nest	9.3636	9.0000
Mid-aged Adults	8.7024	7.0000
Seniors	5.0000	4.0000
Total	12.1902	11.0000

## Comparisons of Service Levels Between Airdrie and Other Communities

Facilities	Service Levels Per Capita Population (Rounded)			
	Airdrie	Average of Other Communities	Per	
Indoor	Aquatic flatwater	10,000	5,000	25 lane equivalent
	Aquatic leisure	62,000	48,000	Pool
	Arts/performance facilities	62,000	57,000	Facilities
	Banquet/hall/room/spaces	12,000	7,000	Spaces
	Boarded ice rinks	12,000	13,000	Playing surface
	Climbing Wall/bouldering facilities	0	75,000	Facilities
	Dance studios	12,000	12,000	Locations
	Gymnasitics facilities	62,000	35,000	Locations
	Gymnasiums	31,000	49,000	Playing surface
	Indoor Playgrounds	62,000	26,000	Playgrounds
	Indoor running tracks	62,000	68,000	Locations
	Leisure ice	0	68,000	Surface
	Library/Branches	62,000	57,000	Locations
	Martial arts studios	10,000	9,000	Locations
	Performance ice rinks	0	80,000	Playing surface
	Private fitness centres/studios	4,000	2,000	Locations
	Public fitness centres	62,000	57,000	Locations
	Racquet Courts	0	33,000	Courts
	Turf field facilities	31,000	36,000	Playing surface
	Outdoor	Aquatic pool	0	15,000
Ball diamonds		3,000	2,000	Diamond
BMX Park/Trails		62,000	76,000	Park
Disc golf courses		7,000	6,000	Holes
Outdoor ice rinks		10,000	21,000	Playing surface
Rectangular sport fields		1,000	2,000	Field
Skateboard Park		62,000	44,000	Park
Spray/splash park		62,000	39,000	Park
Tennis/pickleball racquet courts		21,000	9,000	Courts



the future of  
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